

**TEACHING CULTURE IN CHINESE UNIVERSITY EFL
CLASSROOMS:
UNDERSTANDING INSTRUCTORS' PERSPECTIVES AND
PEDAGOGICAL DECISIONS**

A dissertation

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ABSTRACT

Foreign language education scholars from the West have agreed for a long time on the importance of including culture in foreign language classroom (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Fantini, 1997; Hall, 2002; Hymes, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; Seelye, 1993) and countries in the East have taken up this work, often without locally produced research. This dissertation study hopes to contribute to this gap by exploring the attitudes and practices that Chinese English as a foreign language (EFL) instructors have regarding culture integration, in a time after a top-down nation-wide policy, the *College English Teaching Reform* (2002), explicitly calls for such integration.

Against this policy backdrop and in response to these empirical gaps, the present study examines how four Chinese EFL university instructors teach culture and why they teach it the way that they do. This qualitative multi-case study includes the analysis of classroom observations, stimulated recalls, and individual interviews with the key policy actors (instructors, the Dean of the School, and the primary policy-maker) using constructivist theories (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Richardson, 1997; Steff & Gale, 1995). Findings show that although linguistic proficiency is still prioritized over culture learning in the instructors' teaching, a wide range of culture-related topics were included in the university level EFL classrooms. However, culture was usually regarded as facts and mainly introduced through teacher presentations with anecdotal information consisting of stories of the instructors' personal knowledge of the target culture as outsiders. The myriad of cultural perspectives, which exist behind these facts, were seldom discussed in instruction by the case study participants. This study also indicates that the instructors' curricular and instructional decisions were greatly informed by their

attitudes toward culture teaching, pre-existing culture knowledge, and the pedagogical approaches they used. The Reform was not found to have a direct impact on instructors' pedagogical decisions.

Implications of this study include the need for the professionalization of EFL teaching and elevation of instructors' cultural knowledge as well as their pedagogical knowledge. For culture integration and *Reform* enactment to occur in the Chinese EFL context, there needs to be a multi-pronged and systemic approach involving all policy arbiters (Johnson & Johnson, 2014), including policy makers, teacher education programs, EFL program administrators, and instructors in the process of creation, interpretation, and appropriation of language education policies. This study argues for more sense-making of national Chinese policies by local actors such as instructors and program administrators.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Authors in the field of foreign language (FL) teaching agree on the importance of teaching and learning foreign languages and cultures for communication (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Fantini, 1997; Hall, 2002; Hymes, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; Seelye, 1993). The approach to FL education is shifting from the traditional teaching approach which focuses on the language itself to a communicative approach which emphasizes both linguistic and cultural competence for intercultural communication (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Hymes, 1972; Kramsch, 1991). The beginning of this shift was seen in the articulation of the mission of foreign language teaching described by ACTFL, the premier professional association of American foreign language teachers. In Chapter Eight of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012), “developing oral communication strategies” is described as an important component of students’ language competence.

Based on the shift in FL teaching, culture has become a new focus of FL education. In the U.S. national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards Project, 2006) (hereafter the *Standards*), culture is composed of three intertwined dimensions: cultural practices, cultural products, and cultural perspectives. Therefore, including culture in FL classroom is not identical to delivery of the superficial facts (Byram, 1989; Paige et al., 2003). The teaching needs to promote students’ cultural knowledge (knowledge of a specific culture as well as general cultural knowledge) and cultural awareness which helps them be open to “otherness” and interpret issues from different cultural perspectives (Byram, 1989, 2002; Kramsch,

1993; Paige et al., 2003). Nowadays, there are more and more scholars devoted to the study of culture integration.

The focus of this dissertation study is exploring if and how culture is included in university level EFL education in China, given a new educational policy reform called College English Teaching Reform (hereafter, referred to as the *Reform*). It examines the culture teaching practice of four Chinese instructors as well as potential reasons for their curriculum and instructional decisions regarding culture teaching. This chapter outlines the context of the English education in China, which is essential for situating this new initiative. It also introduces the College English Teaching Reform, which is currently implemented to import communicative teaching and encourage culture teaching and learning.

1.1 EFL Education in China

English as foreign language (EFL) instruction has been a key component of the educational system of China since the late 1970s, when the Cultural Revolution ended and the Chinese Economic Reform began (Hu, 2002b). It has been recognized by the government as an essential tool for accelerating the scientific and technological social modernization of the country, as well as a means to bridge gaps in commercial and cultural interactions with other countries (Cowan, Light, Mathews & Tucker, 1979; Hu, 2002b; Lessard-Clouston, 1996).

Raised to such a high status, learning English is mandatory for students across all educational levels, from K-12 through graduate education. For a long period, however, there have been many negative characterizations of EFL instruction in China circulating in the professional literature. Some of the commonly circulated negative

characterizations of EFL teaching in China include the priority of teaching grammar, teacher-centered instruction, and the lack of development of communication skills among the students. In many EFL classes in China, improving students' skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening is the primary teaching objective other than developing students' communicative competence (Hu, 2002b). Other common characterizations include an overpowering focus on test-oriented approaches. Following this approach, textbooks and teacher's instructions are typically the only sources available for students' learning in the class as the students listen to the instructions and take notes; pedagogies that include learner-centered, communicative approaches are scarce and the students may not have opportunities to ask questions during the class (Hu, 2002a; Lessard-Clouston, 1996; Luk, 2012; Wang & Coleman, 2009); approaching the end of each semester, the students typically take final-term exams which focus on reading and writing; these written exams usually are the only forms of evaluation (Hu, 2002a; Jin, 2008; Wang & Coleman, 2009). It is also important to note that teachers normally do not have opportunities to develop their own curriculum. While there are certainly exceptions. While not always true, these descriptions of EFL classes in China ring true to many and help explain why it is common for individuals to have few communicative skills after a decade or more of classroom language learning experience.

1.2 College English Teaching in China

In university-level EFL education, classes for English majors and non-English majors are in separate programs. On the whole, the former are assumed to possess higher English proficiencies than the latter because of more exposure to English resources and learning activities. For the English majors, curricula are usually designed around

subjects related to English, such as English grammar, writing, reading, listening, literature, and translation. Non-English majors usually are required to accomplish a series of English courses called “College English” in four successive semesters once they entered college. Like those of K-12 levels, many College English classes still tend to follow teacher-centered approaches. In these classes, students may also lack learning initiatives and practice opportunities (Hu, 2002a; Wang & Coleman, 2009). However, more and more College English educators have realized the limitations of the traditional EFL classes. They are trying to change the situation. Borrowing new educational theories and pedagogies from the West is one of the solutions that Chinese EFL educators have found (Cai, 2013; Wang, 2006, 2009; Wang & Wang, 2011; Zhang & Luo, 2004).

In 2002, a nation-wide reform on College English teaching was initiated by Chinese Ministry of Education to improve the quality and outcomes of university-level EFL education, and help China to meet the new challenges when participating in globalization (Hu, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2007). An important feature of this reform is an effort to import communicative language teaching approaches from the West (Hu, 2002; Jin, 2008). It is assumed that this effort will help shift the focus of College English teaching from enhancing students’ reading and writing abilities to developing their communicative competence, in particular the competence of listening and speaking in English. To realize this shift, the teachers are encouraged to integrate culture and new technology into the classroom teaching (Jin, 2008).

In 2004, an official document, called *College English Curriculum Requirements* (hereafter the *Requirements*) was composed and published by the Ministry of Education

to enhance the Reform and document its policies. This official document was a collaborative accomplishment among Chinese EFL educators, researchers, and administrators from the National Foreign Language Teaching Direction and Advisory Board under the Ministry of Education (hereafter the Advisory Board). It provided a series of teaching and evaluation guidelines for classroom teaching. In this document, “College English” was defined as a combination of English knowledge, language skills, learning strategies, and communicative competence. The teaching objectives of the courses were set to develop students’ abilities to study independently, to improve their cultural knowledge and awareness, and to prepare them for future communication with English speakers. Based on these objectives, teaching requirements were formulated and categorized into three levels: basic, intermediate, and advanced. To meet the requirements, student-centered and web-based exploratory language learning models were proposed.

1.3 The Project Emerges after the Provision of the Requirements in 2004

The provision of the *Requirements* in 2004 has been recognized as a revolutionary step in Chinese EFL education (Hu, 2002b; Jin, 2008). Culture inclusion in EFL teaching and learning was emphasized for the first time. Besides providing a theoretical framework and guidelines for *the Reform* and College English teaching, this was another significant contribution that the *Requirements* made to Chinese EFL education. In the document, improving students’ “cultural awareness” and “culture knowledge” is described as two essential prerequisites for the objective of promoting students’ abilities to use the English language in intercultural communication.

Many discussions around the *Reform* and the *Requirements* have been carried out (e.g., Cai, 2006; Jin, 2008; Wang, 2006; Wang, 2010; Wang & Zhang, 2011; Zhang, 2008; Zhang & Luo, 2004). Some of the discussions focus on the new cultural component of the Reform (Dong, 2006; Jin, 2008; Liu, 2003; Peng & Wu, 2016; Wang, 2012). Most related publications, however, are theoretical and not research-based. Empirical studies have remained scarce. There is a need for empirical research on the issue in *Chinese* contexts where powerful traditions of language-focused approaches that have given little attention to the integration of culture teaching prevail. It is especially of critical importance considering the currently implemented reform as it accentuates EFL instructors' culture inclusion. This study seeks to contribute to this body of research by reporting on four Chinese instructors' perspectives on culture teaching and culture teaching practice in their university-level College English classes. In this dissertation study, I examined how these four instructors taught culture in the classroom and why they taught in the way that they did. Data collected from classroom observations, stimulated recalls, and individual interviews were triangulated and analyzed. By doing so, I hope to contribute empirical research to the field of culture teaching studies in China. I will use my results to offer recommendations for teacher training programs and the school administration to improve the instructors' motivation and abilities regarding implementation of culture teaching.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

This literature review serves to situate the present study in relation to existing theories and research on culture teaching in FL education. This chapter is composed of five sections. The first section discusses the importance of culture in language classrooms. The second section examines the existing cultural conceptions in FL education. The third section describes the pedagogical principles and suggestions for teaching culture. The fourth section reviews the research literature on culture teaching and examines the effects of existing approaches of culture teaching. The last section of this literature review focuses on the practice and research on culture teaching conducted in Chinese educational contexts.

2.1 Culture Teaching in FL Classroom

Historically, the view that language teaching was an endeavor to teach the linguistic knowledge prevailed in many FL settings. Students' knowledge of the grammar and their abilities to use the four skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—in the target language were often given primacy during the teaching process (Pound, 1934). In the classroom, learning of grammar was the “fundamental” skills of FL education because it “secures” the accuracy of students' writing and speaking (Snow, 1947). “The idea of an irreducible minimum of grammar, however tempting, should be rejected as an illusion” (Snow, 1947, p. 200). Once language learners acquired enough of these knowledge and skills, it was believed that they had reached a certain level of language competence and were ready to establish communication with people speaking

that language (Koch, 1947). In these classrooms, culture was not often given the prominence it deserved within language curriculum (Byrd, et al, 2011).

Around the middle of the twentieth century, language educators began to reconsider the role of culture in language classrooms (Lessard-Clouston, 1996). New understandings of the relationship between language and culture were developed. Since the mid of 90s, it has been vigorously argued and widely accepted that language and culture are and should be intertwined (Byram, 1989, 1994; Byrd, Hlas, Watzke, & Valencia, 2011; Crawford Lange & Lange, 1987; Fantini, 1997; Grittner, 1996; Hall, 2002; Jiang, 2000; Kramsch, 1993, 1995; Kramsch, Cain & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996; Lustig & Koester, 1999; Moran, 2001). Crozet and Liddicoat (2000) equalize culture with spoken and written language produced for special purposes. Stern (1983) believes that a language syllabus without cultural components is incomplete and meaningless. Scholars have argued over and over again that a balance between language and culture needs to be achieved. There is, however, no one pedagogy to achieve this and the many contexts with many different curricular pressures to confront.

It is also widely accepted in the scholarship in this area that effective communication between people from different cultures is not only dependent on a shared language, but also dependent on a mutual understanding of the culture (Hall, 2002; Wintergerst, McVeigh, & Brown, 2014). This is because language is always bound up with culture when it is used to conduct communication. Brown (2007) describes this relationship by saying:

Language is a part of a culture, and culture is a part of the language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the

significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition (as may be the case, say, in acquisition of reading knowledge of a language for examining scientific texts), is also the acquisition of a second culture (p. 31).

Language “expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultural realities” (Kramsch, 1998, p. 3) and culture is the social context in which the language is used. Culture is transmitted through language (Byram & Risager, 1999). Without cultural knowledge, it is hard to understand the meaning of the language.

Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002), and Hall (2012) explain the relationship between language and culture from a sociocultural perspective. On the one hand, language is a sociocultural *resource*. It “is a repository of culture and a tool by which culture is created” (p.17). Much of this scholarship has demonstrated that people use language to conduct social communication during which we create our cultural and social identities. On the other hand, culture is a sociocultural *practice*: it frames the content of language and shapes the meaning of language as well as its application in communication. In other words, “culture is communication” (Hall, 1973, p. 97).

communication. In other words, “culture is communication” (Hall, 1973, p. 97).

There has been a consensus in the literature about the interrelatedness between language and culture. The literature (e.g., Byram, 1994; Byrd et al., 2011; Crawford Lange & Lange, 2001; Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000; Fantini, 1999; Grittner, 1996; Hall, 2002; Kramsch, 1998; Lustig & Koester, 1999; Moran, 2001) calls upon FL teachers to make the culture a more meaningful part of the classroom. Byram (1989) encouraged FL teachers to regard culture as the “real business” of the language class and include culture

“both overtly and implicitly, both consciously and incidentally” (p. 3) to foster an understanding and acceptance of the people of the target culture and of other cultures in general.

Besides the inextricable relationship between language and culture, another reason for the call for FL teachers to teach more cultural content is the crucial role that culture plays in reducing students’ stereotypical assumptions of the target language(s) and cultures(s). Stereotypical assumptions or ignorance of the target language(s) and culture(s) which may undermine students’ self-positioning when they encounter the target culture, have become a top priority for FL or L2 teachers (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). According to seminal arguments on this topic, when given opportunities to explore others’ ways of life or perspectives, students’ intercultural awareness can be increased and their existing stereotypes can be reduced (Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1987; Liddicoat & Crozet, 1997; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005). Like Byram (1989) says,

The contribution which the understanding of another culture and civilization should make to the reduction of prejudice and the encouragement of tolerance is one of the unchallenged beliefs of language teachers” (p.15).

Another reason for educators to advocate culture teaching is its positive impact on students’ language acquisition. During the inclusion of culture, students are endowed with access to authentic resources and communicative opportunities. Their engagement in class activities and motivation to learn and to reflect on the learning process is greatly promoted (Adamowski, 1991; Altstaedter, 2009; Byram, 1994; Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Hsu, 2006; Moore, Morales, & Carel, 1998; Wang, 2009; Webber, 2001). Therefore, culture teaching does not only help promote students’ cultural knowledge or awareness,

but also has the potential to increase engagement and thus facilitate their language acquisition opportunities.

For the above reasons, educators and researchers exhort FL teachers to include more cultural content in the classroom (Byram, 1994; Byrd et al., 2011; Crawford Lange & Lange, 2001; Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000; Fantini, 1999; Grittner, 1996; Hall, 2002; Kramsch, 1998; Moran, 2001). Culture should no Longer be a supplementary component to language instruction, but an integral part in teaching and learning (Byram, 1994; Lustig & Koester, 1999).

Besides a call upon culture teaching, the literature also highlights suggestions to foster effective culture teaching. Effective culture teaching aims to promote students' cultural experience and cultural awareness which help them to interpret issues from different cultural perspectives, evaluate culture-related issues from both one's own cultural values and values of other cultures, and interact with people from different cultures (Byram, 1989; Guilherme, 2002; Bennett, 1998; Kramsch, 1993; Paige et al., 2003). During the culture learning process, students are expected to build up their reflexivity abilities, by which they are able to analyze their own culture "from an external perspective and underline its relationship with other cultures in order to facilitate communication" (Byram & Risager, 1999, p. 58). Students' positive attitudes toward cultures different from their own and their openness to "otherness" are also developed (Byram, 1989, 2002; Paige et al., 2003). To achieve these objectives, both knowledge of a specific culture and general culture knowledge should be included in the classroom (Byram, 2002; Paige et al., 2003).

2.2 Cultural Conceptions in FL Education

Although the significance of culture for FL/L2 education has been recognized, making decisions on what kind of culture to include can still be debated and contested by classroom teachers.

In the early parts of the 20th century, the term culture was used to refer to the group of people who were more ‘developed’ than others. In this sense culture includes the accomplishments of a society, such as the great literary masterpieces, history, and art (Sapir, 1949). This sort of thinking promoted drawing a clear line between language and culture. An outcome of this way of thinking about the role of culture in students’ programs was that culture often became an essential part of literature courses (Pound, 1934), but not essential to the classes designed to develop basic language proficiency.

Around the 1960s, the line between language and culture finally became blurred. Educators like Brooks (1968) began to emphasize the importance of culture not for literature but for language teaching and learning. New cultural models were constructed for use in FL teaching (Steele, 1989).

When communication began to take the center stage of FL education, the distinguished achievements of human beings in history, culture was categorized into small c and big C cultures. According to Kramsch (1991), big C culture was the culture of “literacy classics and works of arts,” and small c culture mainly included the culture of people’s life, such as the “foods, fairs, folklore, and statistical facts” (p.218). Later, the small c and big C were specified and expanded to aspects of life style (small c) and civilization (big C) (McCarthy & Carter, 1994; Singerman, 1996). Both small c and big C cultures have been criticized for being culture-specific (Moran, 2001). In this

conception, cultures are bounded to nations and categorized into “American culture,” “Chinese culture,” and cultures of other groups.

No matter big C or small c, some scholars emphasized the dynamic and changeable characteristics of them. They defined culture as the system of values and norms which were continually developed from the interactions between community members (Geertz, 1973; Hofstede, 1983; Byram & Doye, 1999). In this sense, a successful language education, according to Byram and Morgan (1997), “develops beyond linguistic proficiency and manifests itself in communicative performance” (p.8).

The boundary of the definition of culture changed around the end of 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries from simply referring to the formal aspects of civilization to everything— including both material and spiritual aspects of the society. Educators (Hall, 2002; Kramsch, 1993; Byram & Morgan, 1994) with a sociolinguistic background emphasize the context of language application. They have given priority to the tangible aspects of culture and defined culture as membership in a discourse community, which consists of a body of knowledge shared by the members of a society, such as values, norms, attitudes, and religions (Hall, 2002). This knowledge helps people to use verbal and nonverbal language, gestures, eye contact, space, and touching appropriately and to communicate accurately in a specific cultural context (Brown & Starkey, 2007; Fantini, 1999; Moran, 2001).

Compared to the above conceptions which focus on a generalization of the characteristics of culture, the U.S. national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards Project, 2006) provides a very specific and pedagogically useful tool for thinking about culture integration. In this conception,

culture consists of three interrelated dimensions (3Ps): cultural products, practices, and perspectives. Cultural practices are commonly accepted patterns of behavior in a society. Cultural products are the creation of the society, both tangible, such as the artifacts, and intangible, like the social system. Cultural perspectives comprise meanings, beliefs, values, norms, and perceptions shared by the members of the society. This three-pronged model of culture represents how products, practices, and perspectives are interrelated within certain social contexts (National Standards, 2006). According to Lang (1999), the most significant improvement of the 3Ps framework is that it avoids the “common, overworked conflict between C and c by interweaving the formal and informal aspects of daily life, as one normally lives it in any culture” (p.60). The use of this approach permits the teachers to use various materials or resources, formal or informal, when planning the instructional lessons (Lang, 1999).

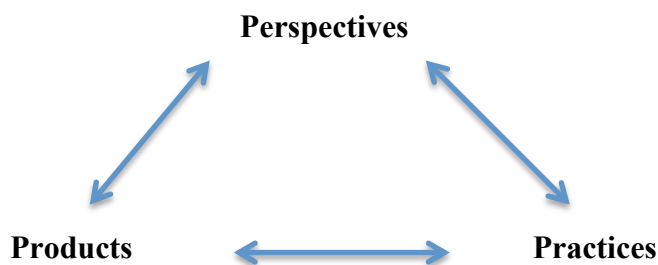


Figure 1. 3Ps of Culture: Products, Practices, and Perspectives

(National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999, p. 47)

The advent of the *Standards* drew more attention to the role of culture in language classrooms and identified culture as a fundamental component in FL education (Byrd et al., 2011). It has affected how the teachers approach teaching because it provides a useful framework of anticipated cultural knowledge and strategies upon which models of articulation can be built for teaching from elementary school to college

(Scebold & Wallinger, 2000). It also shifts the focus of teaching culture to a study of underlying values, attitudes, and beliefs, rather than simply learning about cultural products and practices (Dema & Moeller, 2012). It was revealed that after the introduction of the *Standards*, FL teachers dedicated much more time of teaching to culture (Scebold & Wallinger, 2000). The 3Ps framework has also been applied in research (e.g. Pauchulo, 2005; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005; Storme & Derakhshani, 2002).

The definition of culture in this study mirrors the definitions of Byram and Doye (1999), Geertz (1973), and Hofstede (1983). Culture in this study refers to a shared body of knowledge evolving from values, beliefs, and norms which are constantly constructed through social interactions. This definition is more closely related to the perspective dimension of culture of the *Standards*. In my data analysis, I used the 3P definition as the analytic framework because it was a specific and pedagogically useful tool for thinking about culture integration, particularly for identifying and categorizing the topics that the instructors talked about in their classrooms.

The 3Ps framework was borrowed in this dissertation study also for the following considerations. First, it is a broad and comprehensive conception that covers all aspects of humanity. This conception has no complicated terminology. It seems easy for FL teachers to understand and interpret. Second, this framework is a practically useful tool for teachers to use in the classrooms. It allows them to see the relationships among the three elements of culture when planning their instructions. The 3Ps framework explains the relationship among the three cultural dimensions. When using it in the preparation for the instructional lessons, the instructors may tie the disparate

knowledge about products and practices and relate them to the perspectives. In doing so, the teaching may involve the culture as an overall system. Although some instructors may still focused on one or two dimensions in some cases, the practitioner framework was still useful because it provided a framework that they can follow.

2.3 Pedagogical Principles and Suggestions for Culture Teaching

As the previous sections discussed, culture should be an assumed and inevitable fact of curricula for FL classes. When culture is not integrated, what problems does the absence of culture teaching lead to, and what strategies can be used to resolve these problems? This section will explores the literature addressing this central question.

Educators indicate that FL/L2 students bring to the classroom their learning beliefs, values, and impressions of the target language(s) and culture(s), which have been shaped in part by their experience and encounters, and in part by what they have heard from films, newspapers or friends (Drewelow, 2013). Thus, it is very easy for learners living in a specific culture to limit themselves to the views of outsiders, especially for those who have few opportunities to experience people or societies different from themselves. Such a limitation frequently leads to problems such as misunderstandings, misconceptions, and stereotypical assumptions of the target culture and people, who are “foreign” or “other” (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005). Among these problems in FL learning, students’ stereotypical assumptions or ignorance of the target language(s) and culture(s) which may undermine learners’ self-positionings when they encounter the target culture, have become a top priority for foreign language (FL) or second language (L2) teachers (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). In other words, lack

of exposure to difference, can lead to uniformed generalizations and also allow the persistence of a lack of awareness of one's own culture.

According to Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), stereotyping is “labeling or categorising particular groups of people, usually in a negative way, according to preconceived ideas or broad generalisations about them – and then assuming that all members of that group will think and behave identically” (p.21). According to some researchers, although it is often viewed as a negative element in intercultural communications, developing stereotypes is a natural and inevitable stage that learners have to go through when beginning to construct understandings of an unfamiliar culture (Allen, 2004; Byon, 2007). When given opportunities to explore others' ways of life or perspectives, learners' inter-cultural awareness can be increased and their stereotypes will be reduced (e. g., Byon, 2007; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005). In this regard, many language educators and researchers (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002; Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1987; Fantini, 1997; Kramsch, 1993; Kramsch, Cain, & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996; Krashen, 1982; Liddicoat & Crozet, 1997; Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, & Colby, 2003; Valdes, 1986) took teaching culture as an effective solution to challenge foreign language learners' stereotypes, especially for those learners who do not have opportunities to go to other countries.

Many discussions on culture teaching have been reported. These discussions included studies of teachers' perspectives or practice, empirical suggestions for teaching, and theoretical suggestions. The following section will focus on suggestions rooted from empirical research.

Among the existing empirical studies on culture teaching, the majority of them belong to the first group. To remedy the lack of research on Spanish teachers' culture teaching practice in Canadian settings, Pauchulo (2005) carried out a case study of two Canadian instructors of Spanish. Besides describing the cultural content that these two instructors taught, the study explored the factors that had impact on teachers' practice. The findings indicated that, as expected, instruction about culture was included in the classroom, while limited time and content was devoted to culture. It was also revealed that participants' teaching beliefs and their personal teaching and learning experience were the main factors influencing teachers' pedagogical decisions in their culture instruction. Pauchulo advised teachers to spend more time and explicit instruction of teaching the cultural content. She also suggested that researchers should do more work to bridge the gap between culture teaching theory and practice to provide more help to the classroom teachers.

Lazaraton (2003) implemented a similar study of two ESL teachers who were non-native English speakers. Their classroom instruction were observed and video-recorded. Her study obtained similar results that the teachers covered a wide range of cultural content and topics in their classrooms. However, those cultural topics were sometimes too broad for the teachers to deal with (Lazaraton, 2003). Her suggestion for the teachers was to say, "I don't know," when they faced some unfamiliar aspects of the culture. They could also shift learning responsibilities from teachers to the students and provide more opportunities to the students to become cultural informants in their own classroom.

Byrd, Hlas, Watzke and Valencia (2011), Ryan (2010), Seru (2002), and Siskin (2007) investigated the relationship between FL teachers' perspectives and their practices. Byrd et al. (2011) gave a survey to 415 world language teachers and 64 teacher educators about the barriers for them in maintaining cultural knowledge and their perceptions of the extent to which the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards Project, 2006) was a focus and motivator for their teaching. A mixed-method analysis of participants' responses revealed a disparity between perspectives of teachers and teacher educators regarding the importance of involving culture into language classes. The study concluded with insightful suggestions for teacher preparation programs, such as being responsible for leading pre-service teachers to acquire more cultural knowledge and skills. This study has a volunteer participation bias because all its participants were volunteers and members of the ACTFL (American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Languages); participants thus might have been familiar with and hold positive attitudes toward those standards. This volunteer participation may be avoided in future studies if participants outside of the ACTFL can be included.

Similar to Byrd et al. (2011), Sercu (2002) also conducted a survey, but her participants were recruited from a broader context. She established a web-based questionnaire and received 150 responses from FL teachers of English, French or German in Belgium, Denmark and the UK. Through a mixed-method analysis, Sercu (2002) discovered that all participants supported culture teaching as part of their professional self-concepts as language teachers, but their practical implementations were not congruent with what they claimed. She found that participants' frequencies of

teaching culture and their cultural topics were very limited. This study was limited by self-reported data. All the results came from the analysis of the data collected from participants' self-reports. Including data from other sources, such as classroom observations, could reduce this limitation.

Besides describing teachers' perspectives and practice, the above studies identified the problems with teachers' culture teaching activities, such as teachers' lack of cultural teaching knowledge or methods. To resolve these problems, a large number of suggestions based on empirical research were afforded, such as the use of dialogical interactions, cultural comparisons, web-based inquires, and culture portfolios. In the following section, these approaches will be discussed together with related studies.

2.3.1 Dialogical interactions and cultural comparisons.

In *Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching* (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002), a set of guidelines for FL teachers in Europe, “skills of comparison, of interpreting and relating”, and “skills of discovery and interaction” (p. 8) are defined as objectives for culture learning and teaching. The researchers found that by putting the target culture(s) and native culture(s) side by side, observing how people think or behave from a different perspective, learners developed more sophisticated understandings of the target culture and deeper understandings of their own culture (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Drewelow, 2013). Their existing misunderstandings and stereotypes were excavated as well during this process. In the U.S., dialogical interactions and cultural comparison are also valued. American scholars strongly encouraged classroom teachers to apply these teaching approaches in their practice (Byrd, 2006; Drewelow, 2013; Hsu, 2006; Moran, 2001; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005;

Sercu, 2002; Tsou, 2005). The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st century* (National Standards, 1999) even set comparison as one of the five goal areas for FL education.

In light of the call for applying dialogical interactions and cultural comparisons, empirical research has been conducted. Two studies are noteworthy. The first one was an intercultural strategy-training project designed for a group of secondary-level Russian EFL students by Savignon and Sysoyev (2005). During the study, students received explicit cultural instructions about cultural knowledge and culture learning strategies, such as the analogies, generalizations, and comparisons besides the language instructions. They were also asked to conduct group discussions and give final group presentations of their learning achievements approaching the end of the program. The analysis of participants' oral reports, projects, term papers, portfolios, and responses to an anonymous survey indicated overall positive attitudes towards the program and agreement on the facilitative functions of the culture learning and interaction strategies. This study contributed to propositions about practical strategies for improving students' cultural competence (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2003) although the training failed to attract students' attention to cultural similarities as well as differences. While a strong example of culture teaching, Savignon and Sysoyev's (2005) project perhaps could have been more efficient if the teachers' expectations were articulated more explicitly at the beginning of the training or if the students were allowed more sufficient time in the preparation period.

Compared with Savignon and Sysoyev (2003), Drewelow (2013) gave the students more instructions and directions at the beginning of the course. In his study of

an introductory French class, the 34 American students received explicit instructions for conducting group discussions and comparisons of French culture and American culture. The findings proved the interactive learning activities and cultural comparisons helped disaffirm students' ethnic stereotypical representations of the target culture and people. The strategies were also found effective in engaging students and prompting their reflections on cultural issues. While Drewelow's study successfully proved the active functions of these strategies in promoting learners' cultural awareness, it had a volunteer response bias. Among students enrolled in four class sessions, only those who had reported changes in their cultural representations of French culture after taking the course, were recruited as participants. Furthermore, because the total number of students enrolled in the four sessions was unaddressed, the percentage of the sample in the population remains unknown, and thus proves difficult to evaluate the extent to which the sample is representative.

2.3.2 Computer/Web-based inquiries.

With the popularization of computers, educational technologies have been applied widely in language teaching and learning. Computer- or web-based inquiries have become another stressed approach for culture teaching. Multimedia, Internet, email and various web-based resources like the Wiki, YouTube, and blogs have become facilitative tools for teachers and learners, in particular in obtaining authentic materials and enabling interactive communication with native speakers of the target language (Hsu, 2006; Moore, Morales, & Carel, 1998; Pauchulo, 2005; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005; Storme & Derakhshani, 2002).

Authentic materials, which are usually defined as materials being produced by and for native speakers, are central to culture teaching (Hadley, 1993; Kramsch, 1993; Kramsch, A'Ness, & Lam, 2000; Hsu, 2006; Moore, Morales, & Carel, 1998; Paige, 2003; Pauchulo, 2005; Valdes, 1986), but for a long period, FL/L2 teachers have faced a scarcity of authentic materials. This difficulty is pronounced especially in Asia, where many English teaching materials are outdated or inauthentic (Hsu, 2006; Krashen, 1982; Luk, 2012; Tsou, 2005). Such materials may lead to stereotypical assumptions of the target culture. Considered as solutions, web-based approaches have been highlighted by researchers (Altstaedter, 2009; Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Hsu, 2006; Moore, Morales, & Carel, 1998; Wang, 2009). These researchers agree on the benefits that web-based approaches bring, such as exploiting enormous authentic resources, alleviating time and space constraints (especially for learners without the experience of living in a foreign country), promoting language acquisition, fostering critical thinking, engaging and motivating learners, and shifting the classroom from teacher-centered to student-centered (Altstaedter, 2009; Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Hsu, 2006; Moore, Morales, & Carel, 1998; Wang, 2009). They pointed out limitations as well, such as the difficulty of choosing proper resources according to learners' language proficiencies and cognitive competences (Hsu, 2006; Wang, 2009).

A common suggestion for including more authentic resources is to involve the new technologies. Some researchers devoted to investigation of teachers' perspectives on teaching culture via technologies. Moore, Morales and Carel (1998) conducted a state survey of the issue in Texas. The results of the survey revealed that those teachers did not frequently make use of computer facilities in their classrooms. It was not what the

researchers had expected. Among the facilities used, video learning materials, such as online films, were preferred to interactive media materials. It was also indicated that teachers' education levels, lengths of teaching experience, and school geographies accounted for the differences in their frequencies of using technologies. To encourage and direct language teachers to use new technologies, researchers suggested an inclusion of educational technology courses or workshops in teacher preparation or training programs.

More researchers were interested in the effects of web-based culture teaching models in practice. Altstaedter and Jones (2009) taught Argentina culture in an introductory Spanish class at an American university. All the learning materials were selected from the Internet. During the semester-long program, the students were asked to complete three questionnaires and individual interviews as the end of the project approached. A mix-method analysis of their responses revealed that this web-based project was a viable model in implementing culture teaching. It helped promote students' perceptions of and values related to Spanish language and Hispanic cultures. In addition, students' language competence was also improved. As the researcher themselves realized, however, the findings could be more persuasive if more participants had been recruited. Usually fourteen participants are not sufficient for generating statistical indications. This problem aside, the study successfully avoided the pitfalls identified by previous research projects. Traditional instructions were combined with inquiry-based instructions and the online cultural resources were chosen according to students' language proficiencies.

Garett-Rucks (2013) also studied the use of web-based culture teaching in college-level introductory FL class at an American university. However, different from Altstaedter and Jones' (2009) study, this project was carried on outside of the regular class hour. During this semester-long project, the students received cultural instructions and conducted group discussions on the Internet after the school. At the end of the semester, students were interviewed individually about their own learning and views on the project. The analysis of students' online discussions and interviews revealed a great improvement in their cultural understandings as well as a general shift from ethnocentric-oriented toward ethnorelative-oriented cultural views. This study proved the effects of the computer-mediated approach on students' cultural learning carried outside of the school, but it perhaps is not an appropriate practice for in-class activities based on its time-consuming nature. The limitation on class hours is always a big barrier for FL teaching (Hu, 2002; Hsu, 2006; Lessard-Clouston, 1996; Pauchulo, 2005).

2.3.3 Culture portfolio approaches.

After the publication of the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP) (Council of Europe, 2001), which concluded findings of a series of pilot studies implemented in Europe, culture portfolios have received more attention as an effective way to reduce FL/L2 learners' stereotypes. According to Allen (2004), Byon (2007) and Little (2002), the most significant contribution of culture portfolios is the introduction of self-assessment. This teaching approach has been proven successful in conducting autonomous cultural investigations and motivating the students. Through undertaking tasks of identifying their pre-existing stereotypical assumptions of the target culture(s) and comparing the target culture(s) with their native culture(s), students' stereotypes

were reshaped and their cultural awareness was cultivated. Overall open attitudes toward “difference” or “otherness” were developed as well (Allen, 2004; Byon, 2007).

Little (2002) was the first educator who systematically introduced the culture portfolio approach. He summarized the pilot portfolio projects carried out by the member states of the Council during 1998 to 2000, and described the obligatory components of ELP (including a language passport, a language biography and a dossier), its functions (reporting function and pedagogical function), and origins. According to his findings, the ELP was evaluated as an important innovation for FL students in assessing their own proficiencies. Not only students’ learning outcomes, but also their learning processes were assessed. Little (2002) also indicated that the main pedagogical challenge of culture portfolio projects lay in students’ capabilities to assess themselves. To solve this challenge, he suggested teachers establish explicit assessment guidelines and checklists.

Allen (2004) and Byon (2007) implemented similar culture portfolio approaches in university-level FL classes at American universities. Both of their projects consisted of 7 stages, including teacher’s instructions, students’ identifications of personal stereotypes of French culture, their autonomous investigations on the topics related to their stereotypes, self-reflection on their own learning processes, reshaping the pre-existing hypotheses, culture comparisons, and report of final reflections. Their project successfully portrayed students’ cultural learning processes, during which students’ cultural understanding and awareness were found to be developed. After taking the classes, students became more interested in learning about the target cultures and more open to cultures other than their own.

As a preliminary effort, Allen's (2004) study has problems such as lack of instructions for students about how to make choices among the learning resources and how to write their personal rationales, or lack of interactive opportunities with native French speakers. To avoid these pitfalls, Byon (2007) assigned students to interview Korean students who were studying on the campus. However, he still failed to provide enough guidance for the students doing the tasks. Although there is space for improvement, Allen's (2004) and Byon's (2007) studies have considerably advanced the research on culture portfolios.

Besides the empirical suggestions discussed above, there also have been many theoretical principles, such as the ways to formulate cultural teaching objectives (Adaskou, Britten & Fashi, 1990), methods to integrate cultural content (Lessard-Clouston, 1996), a models of the integrative learning process (Crawford-Lange & Lange, 2001), a model for evaluating cultural knowledge (Storme & Derakhshani, 2002), and methods for construction of authentic context (Fantini, 1999; Kramsch, 1993; Moran, 2001; Wintergerst & McVeigh, 2014; Valdes, 1986). All of these theories and studies are valuable resources for practice, but language teachers need to make their own choices considering the specific contexts and students (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005).

2.4 Culture Teaching Research in China

2.4.1 Cultural Components in Chinese EFL Education.

The discussion on culture involvement has extended beyond Europe and the U.S. In the *College English Curriculum Requirements* (Ministry of Education, 2007), culture teaching was set up as an independent teaching objective of the class. *The Requirements* (2007) claimed that understanding culture(s) of the target language was essential for

students' appropriate interactions with speakers of the target language. Therefore, College English was not only identified as a language class, but also a class to involve culture. Besides the improvement of students' language proficiency, students' cultural knowledge and cultural awareness also needed to be developed.

Culture teaching was explicitly encouraged, however, no specific conceptions of culture were provided in this official document. Besides the lack of a framework for teaching the culture, there were other issues related to the new cultural component that needed to be improved or clarified in the *Requirements*. For example, an emphasis on culture teaching was proposed in the sections of "Teaching Objectives" and "Curriculum Requirements," but it was not reflected either in the section of "Teaching Requirements" or the "Class Evaluations." Both of these sections only concentrated on language teaching, especially teaching of the four skills. These issues aside, it was the first time that culture teaching and intercultural communication was accentuated and emphasized officially in the field of Chinese EFL. Consequently, more discussions on culture teaching and learning in China have been reported after the publication of the *Requirements* (e.g. An, 2011; Hu, 2002a, 2002b; Jin, 2008; Qiao, 2006; Wang, 2008; Zhu, 2010).

2.4.2 Culture Teaching Research in Chinese Educational Contexts

Culture teaching and learning also attracts attention from Chinese language educators and researchers. They conducted empirical studies on the issue in Chinese Educational institutions. Among these studies, the majority stresses the necessity of integrating culture into English classes in China (Jiang, 2000; Yu & Chang, 2009) and

teachers' perspectives on this issue (Hsu, 2006; Lessard-Clouston, 1996; Luk, 2012; Wang & Coleman, 2009; Zhou, 2011). Following are some examples.

Jiang (2000) conducted a survey of word associations in English and Chinese to illustrate the inseparability between language and culture. In the survey, ten words closely related to daily life were chosen as prompts. Two groups of participants, Chinese native speakers and English native speakers, were asked to write down six words related to each of the prompts. After comparing the two groups' answers for "food", the researcher found many distinctions. For Chinese native speakers food meant rice, noodle, meat, etc.; for English native speakers food referred to ice cream, hamburgers, pizza, etc. Therefore, Jiang concluded that the use of language always refers to culture. Jiang's (2000) research confirmed the relationship between language and culture, but her arguments could have been more convincing if participants' answers to all the ten prompts were analyzed and displayed.

Yang and Chang (2009) implemented a questionnaire survey of 283 English majors at a Chinese University, probing intercultural competences of Chinese learners of English. The survey was based on Sercu's (2005) definition of intercultural communicative competence and composed of questions about learners' cultural knowledge, awareness, attitudes and practices. After a mixed-method analysis of participants' answers, researchers concluded that although participants' cultural awareness and strategies still needed to be improved, their overall intercultural competences had been greatly improved. This survey enhanced our understanding of Chinese students' cultural proficiencies and specific aspects that teachers needed to stress in instruction, but it still had flaws. First, since all the participants were English

majors, they only represented English majors in China instead of the entire population of the English learners; but in China, the vast majority of English learners are non-English majors. Second, researchers claimed that the results revealed that learners' cultural competences had been greatly improved (Yu & Chang, 2009), but they did not provide any argument or data to support this conclusion, such as comparisons between students' current and previous language competences. Third, some of the questions in the survey were not effective prompts. For example, one of the questions that claimed to elicit students' cultural knowledge asked if students avoided "violating the others' taboo and infringing on his/her privacy" (Yu & Chang, 2009, p. 24). Such questions might lack validity because it could be easy for participants to guess the answers preferred by researchers. In addition, what this question tested was students' cultural awareness and attitudes, instead of their cultural knowledge.

In order to investigate English teachers' views on culture and culture teaching, Lessard-Clouston (1996) and Luk (2012) interviewed secondary English teachers in China. Although the contexts of the two studies were somewhat different for one occurred on the Chinese mainland and the other in Hong Kong, their findings were analogous. Participants in both studies expressed an overall support for culture teaching. However, in their self-reported practices, they indicated they seldom implemented culture teaching (Lessard-Clouston, 1996; Luk, 2012). Such a disparity was due to teachers' ambivalent feelings about the resources and methods, and the gap between culture teaching and the focus of exams (Lessard-Clouston, 1996; Luk, 2012). Besides the contexts, the two studies also differed in regard to participant groups and researchers' positionings. Participants in Lessard-Clouston's (1996) study were all from China, while

Luk's (2012) study included foreigners from English-speaking countries, like the U.K. In addition, Luk (2012) positioned herself as an insider, but Lessard-Clouston (1996) did not. These differences help display a wider spectrum of the profession and teachers' views. Regardless, the studies were both limited by participants' self-reported narrations as all the other interview/survey studies were. The results would be more convincing if the narrative data could be triangulated by other forms of data resource, such as classroom observations or student interview.

Besides the research on the role of culture in language classes or teachers' perspectives, Chinese language researchers have also looked for efficient strategies to include culture in the classroom. Cultural portfolio, web-based mediation, and integrated anthropology process and task-oriented cultural curriculum are the three approaches they have experimented with and recommended to Chinese teachers of English.

To persuade more English teachers in Taiwan to teach culture and provide them with guidelines, Tsou (2005) designed and implemented a cultural language curriculum in elementary EFL classes. The curriculum combined a task-oriented approach and an anthropological process approach. The researcher selected four classes of students with similar backgrounds and English proficiencies. Two of the classes were assigned as experimental groups and taught by a cultural language curriculum in the following semester. They were encouraged to compare Chinese and English cultures through task-oriented activities, such as watching authentic videos or playing mini-dramas. In contrast, two control groups followed the general language curriculum. Before and after the treatment, students' language proficiencies and cultural knowledge were assessed by STYLE (Saxoncourt Tests for Young Learners of English) and a cultural knowledge

questionnaire respectively. A quantitative analysis of students' scores from the two tests revealed a significant difference in the learning achievements of the experiment and control groups. The experiment groups made more improvements. Moreover, both their language proficiency and cultural knowledge had been significantly improved. Interviews with the instructor and five selected students indicated that compared with the control groups, the experiment groups became much more motivated and active in culture learning. Although the project had some flaws, including the fact that STYLE only assessed students' listening and reading competences other than their comprehensive language proficiencies, it was the first cultural curriculum applied in Chinese EFL classrooms. Tsou (2005) contributed significantly to the progression of culture teaching research in this context.

Wang and Coleman (2009) conducted a survey to explore the perspectives and practices of college-level English teachers and learners on cultural instruction in China, with a special focus on web-based approaches. Forty-seven EFL teachers and seventy-two students were recruited by the researchers via their personal networking. The participants completed two similar questionnaires and a set of semi-structured follow-up questions, which concerned their views on the resources, materials, activities, and evaluations involved in their own culture practices, and on the role and objectives of web-based approaches. The combination of a quantitative analysis of participants' responses to the questionnaires and a qualitative analysis of their responses to the emails revealed that, although there were divergences between the views of teachers and students, most of them were supportive of web-based culture instructions. It was also found that although the Internet was widely used in participants' classes, it was limited

to specific activities, such as information searching. Interactive communication activities were rarely conducted. Moreover, the textbooks were still the primary teaching resources and the Internet was only a complementary tool. To break the restraints and push forward the application of web-based culture teaching in English classes, Wang and Coleman (2009) appealed for cooperation among teachers, policy-makers, school administrators, and teacher educators.

Wang and Coleman's (2009) study was not the first one done on web-based approaches. In 2006, a case study of a web-based cultural curriculum was conducted in Taiwan by Hsu for his doctoral dissertation. Rather than limiting her investigations to the local context, Hsu (2006) designed and taught a web-based cultural project in his classes at a university in Taiwan to overcome problems in culture teaching, especially the paucity of authentic input. In the project, Hsu (2006) ran a cultural workshop for ten English majors. At the beginning, participants took a pre-treatment TOEFL test. Then they took a two-hour face-to-face English class twice a week and one additional online class every week for a semester. In the classes, various online materials, including texts, images, information, newsletters, games and news were selected as learning resources by the researcher from authentic, learner-centered, interactive, and interesting English web sites. The students were encouraged to learn about, select among and reflect on these resources, and search for more related cultural information by using online search engines. Approaching the end of the program, students took an after-treatment TOEFL test, submitted their reflections, and were interviewed. Analysis of the TOEFL scores, interviews, and reflection essays proved the effectiveness of web-based cultural curriculum in improving students' cultural knowledge, general learning skills, critical

thinking abilities, and positive attitudes towards culture learning as well as language proficiencies. Hsu's (2006) research affirmed the effects of web-based culture teaching approaches on Chinese EFL learners. However, the pitfalls of web-based cultural projects were not avoided, such as the lack of opportunities to interact with native English speakers. A combination of network-based curriculum and other culture teaching approaches may help resolve the problem.

Chinese researchers also investigated the culture portfolio. In 2011, Su carried out a culture portfolio project in an English class of 38 English majors at a university in Taiwan. The project was adopted and modified from Allen's (2004) seven steps of implementing culture portfolios. In this semester-long project, students identified their stereotypes of English cultures, composed cultural hypotheses, investigated these topics, compared them with similar issues in Chinese culture, and finally reshaped the hypotheses. Analysis of students' responses to the after-task questionnaire, their portfolios, final presentations and interviews revealed that, for a majority of the students, not only their knowledge of a specific cultural aspect and their awareness of diversities across cultures had been enhanced. Their critical thinking abilities and motivations were also improved. Therefore, Su (2011) concluded that culture portfolios were applicable for English classes in Taiwan. She gave suggestions to teachers who were interested in culture portfolios, such as choosing cultural topics according to students' interest, encouraging students to investigate various perspectives on their topics, and making good use of cultural comparisons to improve students' understandings of both of the target and native cultures. The primary strength of Su's (2011) study is her modifications and improvements of Allen's (2004) model. Although instructions on how

to write portfolios were still missing, students were endowed more time and provided more explicit instructions and assistance in learning to write hypotheses and making use of cultural resources. In order to engage the students and help them conduct face-to-face communications with native speakers, the instructor assigned students to interview native English speakers, who supported or challenged their hypothesis. However, the effects of this activity were not addressed.

2.5. Research Rationale

As this literature and research review has shown, culture teaching has attracted the attention of Chinese language educators and researchers. They have realized the significant role that culture teaching plays in reducing students' stereotypes of English-speaking cultures and in promoting students' intercultural communicative competence.

This review has indicated problems with culture teaching research in China as well. First, although culture teaching has attracted some attention of Chinese researchers, it has been neither exploited as much as language teaching in the local contexts nor translated into teachers' practice. Second, among the publications about culture teaching in China, the vast majority are about theories and not research-based, such as the ones of An (2011), Dong (2006), Hu (2002a, 2002b), Jin (2008), Li (2012), Liu (2003), Peng and Wu (2016), Qiao (2006), Wang (2008), Wang (2012), Yang (2011), and Zhu (2010). Only a few empirical studies have been published such as the studies of Li (2012), Wang (2008) and Zhu (2010). However, the majority of these few studies relied on participants' self-reports and classroom practices were not observed. Third, most of these empirical studies were carried out in specific areas of China, including Hong Kong and Taiwan. Research on culture teaching in the educational contexts of the Chinese mainland is in a

state of poverty. Therefore, there is a great need for more empirical studies on the issue in the educational contexts in the mainland of China. It is especially crucial at this moment when Chinese English education is undergoing a massive transition from traditional teaching models, which focuses exclusively on acquisition of the language and the four skills, to communicative teaching models, which emphasis students' communicative competence. Improving students' understanding of the target culture is accentuated and regarded as an effective approach to build up their communicative competence (Ministry of Education, 2007).

This dissertation study aims to contribute substantively and qualitatively to knowledge about culture integration, in this unique Chinese context. It describes what cultural content that Chinese EFL teachers teach and what methods that they use when teaching culture. To answer these questions, the classroom teaching of four university level EFL instructors was observed and analyzed. The study also investigates how the instructors make their curriculum and instruction decisions via interviews. Semi-structured individual interviews with the instructors were conducted to achieve a deep understanding of their pedagogical decisions and connect their decisions to their cultural knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, concerns, needs, teaching expectations, and other related issues. According to research on educational policy implementation which is going to be discussed in the following chapter, such an exploration is a prerequisite for a successful implementation of culture teaching (Hjern, 1982; McLaughlin, 1987; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Richardson & Cortland, n.d.; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). The perspectives of a school head and a policy-maker were also incorporated to provide

multiple standpoints to understand instructors' decisions as well as to triangulate data collected from the observations and instructor interviews.

To achieve the above objectives, this qualitative multi-case study examines how the four Chinese EFL university instructors teach culture and why they teach it the way that they do. Through analysis of classroom observations, stimulated recalls, and individual interviews, the study concludes with implications for the instructors about ways to improve their culture teaching knowledge and skills. Suggestions for policy-makers, teacher training programs, and school administrators are also provided.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Case study is an empirical research methodology for investigating contemporary phenomena within real social contexts by the use of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1994). Case studies are widely used in psychology, education, and other social science fields (Dobson, 1999; Duff, 2008; Merriam, 1998; Miles, 1979; Ragin & Becker, 1992; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Compared with other forms of social science research, such as experiments, surveys, histories, and archives, case study is especially suitable for the study of complex social phenomena and for exploring topics in less-developed areas because of its in-depth investigation of the subject and sensitivity to the context (Dobson, 1999; Eisenhardt, 1989; Patton, 2001; Stake, 1994, 1995; Yin, 1981, 1994, 2014). According to research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; Patton, 2002), case studies display real examples of people's actions within specific contexts, and more importantly, provide answers to the questions of "how" and "why" they do what they do.

In the present research project, the contexts where I conducted my study were the four EFL instructor participants' classrooms at a Chinese university. The contemporary phenomenon I explored was these instructors' culture teaching practice, in particular their choices about what cultural content to teach and how to teach it. The "how" question that this project sought to answer was how the instructors taught culture in the classroom. The "why" question was why they taught in the ways that were observed. In summary, the purpose of this study was to investigate how these Chinese EFL

instructors teach culture in the classroom and why they teach in the way that they do.

The research questions are:

How do the four Chinese instructors of EFL include culture in their university-level EFL classes?

- a. What cultural content do they include?
 - b. What methods do they use when they include cultural content?
2. How do they make their curricular and instructional decisions regarding culture teaching?
- a. How do these instructors' perspectives on culture teaching and their pre-existing cultural knowledge inform their curricular and instructional decisions?
 - b. How do the nation-wide EFL reform initiatives inform their decisions?

The second research question was answered by looking into the two sub-questions because the study aimed to discover what inside or outside factors led the instructors to make their curricular and instructional decisions about culture teaching, and what and how much impact these factors had on instructors' decisions. According to previous research (Hjern, 1982; McLaughlin, 1987; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Richardson & Cortland, n.d.; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002), the following factors are the main aspects that impact teachers' pedagogical decisions: perspectives on culture teaching, understandings of culture, pre-existing culture knowledge, appreciation for the target language culture(s), knowledge of teaching pedagogies, understandings and interpretations of the new policies, and perceptions of the school administrators'

attitudes toward culture teaching and the new policy initiatives. Therefore, these were the primary factors investigated in the present study.

To investigate the impact of the above aspects on instructors' pedagogical decisions, a combination of methods were used to elicit qualitative data, including classroom observations, document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and stimulated recalls. Class observations provided a context for conversations about teaching culture and helped describe instructors' practice. Interviews and stimulated recalls provided clues to identify potential factors and their impact on instructors' pedagogical decisions, such as their attitudes toward culture teaching, pre-existing cultural and pedagogical knowledge, understandings and interpretations of the new policies, and perceptions of school administrators' attitudes. Data collected from interviews with the Dean of the College and the primary policy-maker were used as references for better sense-making of instructors' behaviors and were also used to triangulate evidence and other standpoints from which to analyze / evaluate instructors' practice and perceptions of culture teaching.

Constructivist theories of understanding the world and creating knowledge served as the theoretical framework which guided this study. According to Constructivism, "knowledge is regarded as being constructed by the individual, such that the individual creates meaning of the world, rather than discovers meaning from the world" (Steff & Gale, 1995, p. xii). It means that human beings make sense of the outside world and construct the knowledge or understandings of specific issues through their own perceptions and interpretations. These perceptions and interpretations are obtained during the process of connecting their pre-existing knowledge and beliefs,

events, and activities that they have experienced (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Richardson, 1997). Constructivists study this process as well as its potential consequences on people's lives (Richardson & Cortland, n.d.; Stone-Wiske, 1998).

In the field of education, a constructivist lens is frequently used to examine students' learning processes and congruence between their achievements and their teachers' expectations. More recently, it has also been applied to study teachers' practice and their implementation of policy initiatives (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Richardson, 1997).

In the field of policy implementation, policy makers have subscribed to idea that the success of an initiative depends solely on whether or not it was deliberately formulated by authorities in the discipline (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). However, constructivists (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002; Richardson & Cortland, n.d.; Palmer & Rangel, 2011) protest against this idea with evidence emerging from qualitative research conducted in real teaching contexts. Their findings indicate that in addition to the policies and contextual specifics, teachers' inner thoughts, such as their stocks of content knowledge, life experience, and personal understandings of policy initiatives exert a significant force on their behaviors and pedagogical choices, which to a great extent determine the success of the innovation. Therefore, research, such as Hjern's (1982) and McLaughlin's (1987), has shown that successful implementation of policy initiatives can be realized not only with the enactment of compulsory policies, but also with consistence between local agents' interpretations of the initiatives and expectations of policy-makers.

The design of this study was inspired by constructivist theories as well as existing research. An understanding of instructors' pedagogical decisions was not informed solely by watching what they did in the classroom. It was also necessary to investigate their decision-making process, and the process through which they combined their pre-existing culture knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, perspectives on culture teaching, and perception of the implementation of new policies. Instructors' pedagogical decisions are the results of a complex process that involves a combination of all of the above forces and factors. As constructivist theories required me to go beyond observations, implementing these theories enabled me to extend the focus of this study to find deeper understandings, which included participants' inner thinking.

It also needs to be mentioned here that besides the above aspects, there could be additional factors that had an impact on instructors' practices, such as individuals' age, openness, political orientation, and family condition. Because of the time and space limitations, this study only focused on those factors that have been found to be more critical in instructors' decision-making processes.

3.1 Research Settings

3.1.1 Z University

This study was situated at a research university in North China that I call ZU. This university was founded over 100 years ago, and falls directly under the purview of China's Ministry of Education. As one of the top 30 universities in China, ZU has obtained a national and international reputation for both its research and teaching achievements. It offers 86 undergraduate-level programs and 351 graduate-level programs. In 2015, the total enrollment of the university reached 30,000, including

10,821 graduate students and 20,081 undergraduate students. More than four thousand staff and teachers work at the university.

3.1.2 English Department in School of Foreign Languages and Literatures

The School of Foreign Languages and Literatures at ZU was set up in 1946. It is composed of five departments (English, Russian, Japanese, German, and French) and four institutes (English Language and Literature, Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Russian Language and Literature, and Translation Studies). At the time of this study there were 142 professors teaching in the school, including 13 full professors, 30 associate professors, 86 assistant professors, and 13 visiting professors from other countries. The educational goals of the School, which are described on its official website, are to develop students' language proficiency and the four skills (list skills here in parentheses) as well as their culture knowledge and communicative competence.

Among the nine departments and institutes, the English Department is the largest. With 68 professors, it offers EFL courses that are called "College English" to non-English majors across the university. Similar to other colleges and universities in China, College English courses are required for all freshmen and sophomores. Beginning when they matriculate to the university, students take College English classes for four consecutive semesters. At the end of the forth semester, they must pass the College English Test 4 (CET4), a national university-level English proficiency test, to receive their bachelor's degrees. Therefore, College English courses are a significant part of students' curriculum.

3.2. Research Participants

3.2.1 Four Instructor Participants

Among the 68 professors teaching at the English Department of ZU, I recruited two males (Cai & Chang as pseudonyms) and two females (Lu & Yang as pseudonyms), through my social network, to participate in the research as case studies. I have several friends who work in the English Department at ZU and I graduated from the same university as them. As part of the recruitment process, I contacted four of my acquaintances and explained that I planned to do a research on instructors' culture teaching in the department and they helped me recruit participants. Each of them connected me to two potential participants who met the following criteria: 1) have considerable experience (at least eight years) of College English teaching (this meant they had taught all four of the consecutive sessions of the CE courses at least two times), 2) have a master-level degree in English Education or related field of study, such as English Literature or English Translation, and 3) are different genders. Four instructors cannot be representative of other instructors in the Department, however, these three criteria were set to ensure some variety of experience, gender, and world views.

I individually met seven of the eight instructors who were connected to in person and the eighth one via the phone. I introduced my research focus, my purpose of meeting them, and my need of participants. Four of them who expressed more interest and willingness to participate in my study were selected and invited to participate in my research. The way that these participants were recruited led to a convenient sample. They were assumed to be interested in the issue of culture inclusion or feel confident in their culture teaching practice.

Table 1: Participants

Parti-	G	A	Education	Study Focus	Teaching	Class
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participant			Background		experience	observed
Cai	M	31	Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature; Master in English Interpretation; Bachelor in FL & Cultures Education	Chinese-English translation, Chinese and English literature comparison	College English- 8 years	40 students, Clinical Medicine; 3 rd semester, book 3
Lu	F	33	Master in English Literature; Bachelor in FL & Cultures Education	English literature and cultures	CE- 11 years	30 students, Pharmacy; 4 th semester, book 4
Chang	M	36	Master in English Literature; Bachelor in English Education	English-Chinese translation, English literature	CE- 13 years	40 students, Chemistry; 4 th semester, book 4
Yang	F	43	Master in English Education; Bachelor in English Education	English teaching pedagogy, culture teaching	CE- 21 years	40 students, Physics; 4 th semester, book 4

Among the four instructor participants, Yang was the oldest and the one who had been teaching for the longest amount of time. She had been teaching College English

classes at ZU for 21 years since she had received her Bachelor of English Education from a teachers college at a university located in the same city as ZU. She earned a Master of English Teaching Pedagogy from the same university. Yang also had the highest position among the four participants. She was promoted to associate professor for her extensive experience and excellent teaching achievements in 2012. The other three participants were assistant professors. Yang's position might be why she was very careful about what she said during the interviews, in particular about comments on the new policies of the Reform. She responded very hesitantly when I asked how she perceived the attitudes of the school administrators toward the new policies. In contrast, she provided a lot of information about her perspectives on culture teaching and her own practice of it.

Lu received both her Bachelor of Foreign Languages and Cultures and Master of English Literature from ZU. Many of her current colleagues were her former classmates or class instructors because she had studied and worked at ZU for more than 11 years. Because we graduated from the same university and are of similar ages, Lu felt very close to me and was willing to share her ideas on any topics with me. She told me a lot about her experience of taking master-level courses in the program of Second Language Education in Pei King University in 2011. She was impressed by what she learned from that experience, in particular the new educational theories and pedagogies imported from the West, including communicative teaching as well as culture inclusion. Therefore, she was the participant who had the most knowledge about teaching pedagogies among the four, and the best ability to articulate her thoughts using the professional literature. She was also the one who had intercultural communication experience because she was the

only one who had gone abroad, although it was just a very short experience. Lu and her husband traveled to Malaysia as tourists for a couple of days in 2010.

Chang was from a small town in the Southwest of China and spoke with a strong accent of his hometown. He received his Bachelor of English Education from the teachers college of Yang. After graduation, he taught College English courses at the university from which he graduated. In 2004, he left his job to pursue a Master in English Education at the same university. Three years later, he found a teaching position as Assistant Professor at ZU and resumed teaching College English courses. He thought he was very lucky for having the opportunity to transfer to ZU because it was “a better university with higher reputation for both of its education as well as research quality” compared with to the one from which he graduated. At the time of my interview with him, Chang was preparing to apply for a promotion from assistant professor to associate professor. He was confident in obtaining the promotion because he had been teaching for 13 years and had several publications in academic journals on translation theories and practice.

Like Chang, Cai was not from the city of ZU either. He came from a metropolis in the Northwest of China. The city is on the border between China and Russia. It was a Japanese colony during World War II. Because of its geography as well as its history, many people from other countries lived there. Cai mentioned several times in the interviews that it was a great honor to grow up in such an international city, experiencing various cultures. He was also proud of his family background. Both his parents were working in the art field. One was an oil painter and the other was a photographer. Both of them travelled a lot into other countries. From every trip Every

time after travelling, they brought back special local products as well as stories of what they saw and heard to share with their only son. Under his parents' influence, Cai developed interest in different cultures. He told me that he liked to watch and collect culture-related books and videos in his spare time. Cai also had another source from which to accumulate cultural knowledge. It was the Ph.D. program in Comparative Literature in the School of Chinese Language and Literature at ZU. Through course readings, he had extended his cultural knowledge, especially knowledge about Western cultures.

Comparing the four participants, I found several commonalities. First, all of them are native Chinese speakers and fluent in English as an additional language. They were familiar with Chinese educational systems as well as products themselves of typical EFL classrooms. They understood Chinese students' EFL learning process since they had gone through it. They also knew well the potential barriers for students' learning, because they might have experienced similar barriers themselves. Second, all participants had earned graduate-level degrees in English education, English literature, or related subjects. One of them even had earned a Ph.D. degree in Comparative Literature. It could be assumed that they possessed certain content knowledge as well as pedagogical knowledge. Third, the participants did not have much experience with intercultural communication. None of them had lived or studied abroad for a long period of time. Three of them even had never been lived outside of China. The participants did not have close friends who were from other countries either. However, the geographies of their origins varied. One participant came from a big city in the Northeast. Two of them were from small cities in the South. The other one came from a small city in the

same province as ZU. Thus, they each had varied experiences due to their home towns.. Finally, all participants had accumulated considerable experience in College English teaching, ranging from 8 years to 21 years. They were very familiar with the class content and materials.

3.2.2 Dean of the College and Chair of the Advisory Board

In addition to the four instructor participants, the Dean of the College and Vice Chair of the Advisory Board were also contacted and interviewed. They were included to offer administrative perspectives on the topic of the integration of culture in EFL teaching.

I have known Hu, a professor of Comparative Literature and the Dean of the Foreign Language School for many years, although I didn't take his class when I was an undergraduate student in the school. Fortunately, I have a friend who was one of his favorite students. My friend put me in contact with Professor Hu. After hearing a brief introduction to my study, Hu agreed to participate in the research.

Professor Hu told me that he had taught university-level English courses, including College English at ZU since 1982 when he received his Bachelor in English Language and Literature from ZU. He spent 5 years pursuing a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. After receiving the degree in 2000, he came back and resumed his teaching. As an expert in Comparative Literature, English-Chinese Translation, and EFL Education, Professor Hu had numerous academic publications and became a member of the English Language Education Association of China. This association, which is composed of educators and researchers across the country, is the leading academic association of FL education in China.

Professor Hu was promoted to Dean of the School of Foreign Languages and Literatures in 2007. Therefore, in addition to teaching, he had many administrative responsibilities, such as making plans for the development of the school, setting faculty hiring criteria, and making decisions about the revised curriculum requirements for teachers. My interview with him revealed his perspectives on culture teaching and the Reform initiatives as the College Dean. It has been found that the way that the new policies were translated by the school administrators might affect instructors' interpretation of the policies and their implementation in practice (Hjern, 1982; McLaughlin, 1987). Professor Hu's perspectives on culture teaching and reform initiatives provided more approaches to understand instructors' perspectives as well as their pedagogical decisions. Comparing the perspectives of Hu and instructors on culture teaching and reform initiatives also highlighted how much impact the school had on instructors' pedagogical decisions. Comparing the perspectives of Professor Hu, instructors, and the policy-maker on the issues revealed to what extent, if at all, policy initiatives were transferred appropriately to the local agents—as the policy-makers expected they would be.

3.2.3 Vice Chair of the Advisory Board

Professor Jia taught in the English Department of a very well-known university in the East of China. Before I met him at the 7th International Conference on English Language Teaching in China in October of 2014, Professor Hu had introduced me to him. They had known each other for a long time and developed a good relationship because both of them were vice Chairs of the English Language Education Association of China.

With the connection of Professor Hu, Professor Jia agreed to spare me two hours to talk about his perspectives on culture teaching and interpretation of the reform initiatives. On the afternoon of the second day of the conference, we met in a café on the campus of Nanjing University where the conference was organized. According to him, I knew that Professor Jia received his Ph.D. in English literature from a university in the U.K. in the 1980s. Professor Jia was also the vice Chair of the Advisory Board. This board consisted of foreign language educators and researchers as well as government officials from the Ministry of Education. It falls directly under the purview of the government. All the foreign language education policies in China, including the College English Teaching Reform and the new *College English curriculum Requirements*, were developed by this board.

Including Professor Jia's perspectives on culture teaching and the Reform revealed how and why the new policies were formulated and what the real initiatives of the new policies were. Incorporating Jia's interpretation of the new policies with instructors' pedagogical decisions helped identify potential gaps between policy-makers' expectations and local agents' practice. Comparing Hu's and Jia's interpretations of the new policies revealed how the top-down policies were interpreted by school administrators and then how those interpretations were disseminated to the local teachers.

3.3 Data Collection

Framed within a constructivist framework and identified as a qualitative multiple case study, I used a combination of methods for data elicitation, including document analysis, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and stimulated recalls.

Among these methods, 1) class observations were used to examine instructors' practice and provided a context for conversations about teaching culture. 2) Instructor interviews provided an understanding of their perspectives of culture teaching and the new policies, pre-existing culture knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, and perceptions of school administration's attitudes. 3) The interview with the Dean represented the administration's attitudes toward culture teaching and their interpretations of new policy initiatives. It also provided information about how the policy initiatives were conveyed from the top to local agents via the school administration. According to existing research, this transition may play critical roles in the implementation of policy initiatives because it has a crucial impact on classroom teachers' practice (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). 4) An interview with the vice Chair of the Advisory Board revealed the objectives of new policies and policy-makers' expectations for the implementation of new policies in local contexts. 5) Data collected during a pilot study, specifically from classroom observations and stimulated recalls, were integrated into the present study. This was because these data displayed real pictures of instructors' classroom practice and provided a context for conversations about teaching culture. These data also served to triangulate data collected from the interviews.

3.3.1 First Phase of Data Collection: A Pilot Study

The data collection of this study consisted of two phases that happened in 2013 and 2014-2016. The first phase spanned 6 weeks during January and February of 2013. The purpose of this phase was to become familiar with the research context and participants, to obtain information about participants' background and experience, and to observe their classroom teaching.

In the beginning, I met with the participants, who had been recommended by friends who were working in the same department with them. I introduced myself and my interest in teachers' culture inclusion without revealing my personal attitudes toward culture inclusion. Then, I entered the classroom and observed two consecutive one-hour classes of each participant and took notes. I audio-recorded the classes. Later, I identified and transcribed excerpts related to the observation focus (culture teaching) in the audio records using F5, a free transcription software program downloaded from the Internet. The recordings were transcribed in Chinese or English, depending on the language participants' used while they were teaching. During the transcriptions, I referred to the "Jefferson" transcription conventions (cited in Molder & Potter, 2005) and made some minor changes according to my needs.

Right after the first observations, I asked each participant to do a stimulated recall about the classes. The participant introspectively reviewed his/her instructions in selected excerpts and gave explanations for his/her pedagogical decisions. The conversation was transcribed with F5 into Chinese (the language spoken during the recall) and later, specific selections were translated into English.

After the first observation and stimulated recall, a formal individual interview (Appendix A) with each participant was conducted. The semi-structured interviews focused on participants' general teaching and learning background, experiences of learning culture, training received on culture teaching, attitudes towards culture inclusion in FL classes, and self-reflections on their teaching practices. Since both the participants and I are native Chinese-speakers, all conversations were conducted in

Chinese for the convenience of communication. The conversations were audio-recorded and transcribed into Chinese and later, specific selections were translated into English.

For four weeks following the first interview, I observed and audio-recorded another five two-hour sessions of each participant's class. I also took Field notes during the observations. After each session, I transcribed relevant and useful excerpts of stimulated recalls of participants' curriculum and instruction decisions.

In sum, I obtained a huge quantity of transcribed data was obtained, including 48 hours of class observation, 4 hours of interviews, 12 hours of stimulated recalls, and 52 pages of field notes. These data revealed information about participants' views on culture teaching, knowledge about culture and culture teaching, and implementation of culture teaching. I spent several months transcribing all the audio data into texts. Table 2 describes the data collected during the pilot study phase.

Table 2. Data Collected in Phase I

	Data Source	Date of Collection	Hours Spent	Frequency of Collection
Data from Pilot Study	Classroom observations	1/2013 - 2/2013	48 hours 12 per participant	48 classes 12 per participant
	Stimulated recalls	1/2013 - 2/2013	12 hours in total, 2 per participant	24 times in total, 5 half-hour recall per participant
	Field notes	1/2013 -2/ 2013		
	Instructor interviews	1/2013 - 2/2013	8 hours 2 per participant	8 interviews, 4 per participant

	Document analysis	1/2013 – 7/2013	Textbooks, reference books, and final exams	
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Analysis of the above data revealed a number of findings about participants' culture teaching practice. Observations and stimulated recalls provided interesting insights into participants' culture teaching practice, some of which aligned with findings of previous research, some of which did not. The main findings are summarized as follows. First, culture was constantly included in all participants' curriculum and instructions although the main focus of their teaching was still on the linguistic perspectives of language, grammar, and vocabulary. Second, extensive culture-related topics were discussed in the observed classes, including educational systems, architectures, housing, cigar production, religion, TV shows, fairy tales, pop music, etc. However, the topics were mainly composed of observable cultural phenomena or facts. Third, no participants confined their teaching to a specific variant or variants of culture(s). Cultures of Italy, Greece, Rome, Germany, Denmark, Cuba, France, Russia, Korea, and Japan were all included. Fourth, the specific amount of cultural content included in each participant's classroom varied greatly. Some participants spent around half of their class time teaching culture, but others spent much less. Fifth, the teacher-centered instruction was still the most frequently used teaching approach when culture was included, but other approaches, such as cultural comparisons, authentic materials, images, and dialogical interactions were also used on a lesser scale. Sixth, participants' culture teaching was greatly text-oriented. This had been identified as a tradition of EFL

teaching in China (Lessard-Clouston, 1996; Hu, 2002; Wang & Coleman, 2009). The study showed that the textbooks were still the primary sources for these participants' cultural content. Most of the cultural topics taught in the class came from the textbooks, reference books, or the instructors' personal knowledge. Only a few of them came from authentic resources.

Besides the observations, I also conducted individual interviews with the participants, exploring their background and teaching experience. Participants' attitudes toward culture teaching were another focus of the interviews because there were identified in previous research as a major factor influencing teachers' pedagogical decisions. According to the research, teachers generally had positive attitudes toward culture teaching and shared beliefs in the importance of culture for FL/L2 education (Byrd et al., 2011; Lazaraton, 2003; Pauchulo, 2005; Sercu, 2002; Zhou, 2011). These statements, however, were not supported by the findings of the interview of my pilot study.

In the interviews, participants did not agree on the role of culture. Two of them expressed firm support for culture teaching. The other two participants, however, explicitly devalued the role of culture. For them, teaching culture was only a way to provide students with background information, to serve as a context for language study.

The observations of the pilot study helped me develop an objective understanding of what was going on in participants' classrooms, in particular participants' decisions about what culture to teach and how to teach it. The interviews, however, did not provided much useful insight. Therefore, questions emerged:

- Do participants' attitudes have impact on their practice regarding culture teaching?
- How much culture teaching knowledge do these instructors have?
- Does the knowledge have impact on their practice?
- How do the instructors interpret the reform initiatives?
- Does the Reform have impact on their practice?
- What are the other factors which have impact on their practice?

3.3.2 Second Phase of Data Collection

In order to answer the questions that emerged through the analyses of data collected in the pilot study, I developed the second phase of the study. This phase also helped expand my research from superficial observations of participants' behaviors to deeper understandings of the factors informing their curriculum and pedagogical decisions. The second phase was mainly composed of semi-structured interviews of the four instructors. Interviews with Professor Jia (pseudonym), Dean of the college, and Professor Hu (pseudonym), leader of College English Teaching Reform were also included to obtain various perspectives on the studied issues as well as to triangulate findings of instructor interviews. The interviews were conducted in the summer of 2014, the winter of 2014, and the winter of 2015. The objective of these interviews was to investigate potential factors influencing participants' curriculum and instructional decisions about culture teaching. According to the research as well as my own reflections on the findings of the pilot study, the following two factors were emphasized in particular: 1) participants' perspectives on culture teaching, and 2) the current EFL reform initiatives in China. Table 3 describes the sources of data collected in this phase.

Table 3. Data Sources of the Second Phase

Data Source	Date of Collection	Hours Spent	Frequency of Collection
First round Interviews with Instructors	7/2014 - 8/2014	16 hours, 2 per participant	8 interviews, 4 participants
Interview with Professor Hu	8/2014	2 hours	1 interview, 1 participant
Interview with Professor Jia	10/2014	2 hours	1 interview, 1 participant
2nd Round Interviews with Instructors	12/2015 - 2/2016	8 hours, 2 per participant	4 interviews, 4 participants

Instructor interviews.

In the summer of 2014, semi-structured individual interviews of participants were conducted. The interviews focused on participants' conception of culture, knowledge of culture, knowledge of culture teaching pedagogy, attitudes toward culture teaching, understandings of the reform initiatives, interpretation of the School's attitudes toward culture teaching as well as toward the new policies, and perceptions of the implementation of the new policies in the school. To elicit information about these issues, 90 questions were put forward and grouped into 10 sections according to the themes:

- Participants' general learning and teaching backgrounds

- Participants' cultural knowledge and attitudes towards culture teaching
- Participants' culture learning experiences
- Participants' culture teaching training experiences
- Participants' reflections of their own implementation of culture teaching
- Participants' understanding of the attitudes of the department toward culture teaching
- Participants' understanding of the Reform and interpretation of the new cultural component in *the Requirements*
- Participants' perceptions of the implementation of the new policy
- Participants' understanding of the attitudes of the department toward the new policy
- Participants' overall feedback and suggestions for implementation of the new policies and culture teaching in school

Because the protocol (Appendix B) consisted of a large number of questions, participant's interview was divided into two sections and each section, which lasted for about 2 hours, was conducted separately. Among the questions that were put forward, some had been discussed in the pilot study, but were revised and put forward again in order to elicit more detailed and meaningful information. For example, the following questions were asked in the pilot study interviews:

- What is culture?
- Do you think FL teachers need to integrate culture in their language instruction?
- If you do, could you explain why you think so?

- If you do not, could you explain why not?

In the new interviews, they were improved as following:

- What do you think “culture” is?
- Could you give examples?
- What do you think “English culture(s)” is?
- Could you also give examples?
- How important do you think culture is in EFL classes?
- What kind of culture(s) do you think that teachers should teach?
- How much cultural content do you think should be integrated into the class compared with language instruction?
- In what ways should these cultural content be taught?

By expanding and improving the interview questions, I obtained more helpful information. To ensure all participants were familiar with the new policies and could provide their perspectives on the issue, I provided each participant a printed copy of the *Requirements* and asked them to read through the document before the interview. The interviews were conducted in Chinese for the convenience of communication. All the conversations were audio-recorded and transcribed through F5, a free transcription software program downloaded from the Internet. During the transcriptions, I referred to the “Jefferson” transcription conventions (cited in Molder & Potter, 2005) and made some minor changes according to my needs.

Interview with the Dean of the College and Chair of the Advisory Board

After interviewing the instructors, I interviewed Professor Hu, dean of the School of Foreign Languages. The individual interview lasted for two hours, concentrating on

Hu's perspectives on culture teaching and on the new policies. His perspectives on the reform initiatives were another focus of the interview. Forty-one questions (attached in Appendix C) were categorized according to five themes, including:

- his learning and teaching experience
- administrative working experience
- cultural knowledge and attitudes toward culture teaching
- knowledge and interpretation of the reform initiatives
- knowledge and interpretation of the new culture component in the *Requirements*
- perception of the implementation of culture teaching and the reform initiatives in the college
- expectations for the instructors
- suggestions for the instructors as well as for the policy-makers

Besides Professor Hu, I also interviewed Professor Jia, who was teaching in another university. He was included because he was the Chair of the Advisory Board. As mentioned in the previous section, this board directly answers to the Chinese Ministry of Education and is in charge of the initiation of the English teaching reform and formulation of the reform-related policies as well as all the other major policies in FL education in China. Professor Jia was the Vice Chair of the board, and therefore, was one of the primary policy-makers. The inquiry of his perspective as the primary policy-maker was another approach to reading instructors' pedagogical decisions (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). During the two-hour conversation, 28 semi-structured interview questions (attached in Appendix D) were put forward, which concerned:

- his background and learning and teaching experience
- his experience of working as Chair of the Advisory Board
- his conception of culture
- his perspectives on culture teaching in EFL education
- the objectives of the College English Teaching Reform and the *College English Curriculum Requirements*
- his interpretation of the new cultural component in the *Requirements*
- his interpretation of specific paragraphs in the documents
- his perceptions of the implementation of the new policies as well as the new cultural component
- his expectations for classroom teachers as well as for the school administration
- the work needed to do to improve the policies as well as the implementation

The interview with Professor Jia not only helped me understand the perspectives of policy-makers, but also served as a reference to which I referred when I investigated if the expectations of policy-makers had been interpreted appropriately or fulfilled successfully by the local agents. According to the research, such an investigation could be essential for a successful implementation of policy initiatives and their improvements (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002).

All the above interview conversations were audio-recorded with two recorders to assure the safety of the raw data. The recordings were transcribed into Chinese using F5

and with reference to “Jefferson” transcription conventions (cited in Molder & Potter, 2005).

Follow-Up interviews with instructor participants.

I completed the transcriptions of the above interview conversations by the end of 2014. After doing some preliminary analyses, I had interesting findings, some of which helped me understand instructors’ culture teaching practice. Some of the findings, however, brought out new questions that were not answered by what was already known. For example, in his interview, Chang said that he liked English culture and supported culture teaching. This echoed existing research (Hsu, 2006; Pauchulo, 2005), which argued that teachers generally had positive attitudes toward culture teaching and their appreciation for the target language culture was an important motivation for them to implement culture teaching practice. Cai said that teaching more cultural content was not practical in his school because the school did not encourage instructors to do it. This aligned with findings of existing research (McLaughlin, 1987; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Richardson & Cortland, n.d.), which concluded that the attitudes of school administration had an impact on teachers’ pedagogical decisions. However, incorporating the observations revealed that Chang did a lot of culture teaching in the classroom. Thus, this question arose: which factor, the instructor’s personal views on culture teaching or the school administration’s attitudes toward culture teaching informs the instructor’s practice? Or, which factor played a *more important* role in instructors’ decision-making?

To find the answer(s) to the above question, as well as to investigate the changes that had been happening since previous interviews, I conducted follow-up interviews

with the instructors. This time, the interview protocol (Appendix E) was composed of two sections. The first section of the questions was the same for all participants, focusing on their perceptions of the changes which happened after the previous interviews. Questions in the second section of the interview protocols varied because the questions were designed based on findings of each participant's previous interviews. For example, Cai described many the barriers that prevented him to from teaching more cultural content in his classes in the summer of 2014. In the follow-up interview with him, I asked if he had found solutions for those problems. The interviews were also audio-recorded and transcribed into Chinese.

3.4 Data Coding and Analysis

After all the raw data were collected and transcribed, they were coded and analyzed with a method of thematic analysis (TA). According to Boyatzis (1998), Braun and Clarke (2006), and Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2011), TA is one of the most commonly used analysis methods in qualitative research. It helps researchers identify, analyze, and report themes within data; it helps provide patterned responses to research questions in rich detail. Beyond counting the words or frequencies, TA focuses on describing both explicit and implicit messages within the data and interpreting various aspects of the research objectives. These characteristics are important for this study because this study was not conducted to account for or list the superficial facts observed in the classrooms, like the cultural topics teachers covered. It was conducted to uncover issues regarding why and how the instructors made their pedagogical decisions.

TA has additional aspects that make it a useful tool for the current study. First of all, it is a very flexible method. Compared with other analysis methods, such as

discourse analysis and narrative analysis, TA is not tied to or stems from particular theoretical frameworks. It is compatible with a range of theoretical or epistemological positions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011). Because the current study was an exploratory effort on culture teaching in China, the flexibility of TA, which involves a wide range of analytical options, was appropriate for this study. Second, TA is suited to qualitative research with a large quantity of data or data from multiple sources. This method extracts and summarizes key features of a large body of data, and provides thick interpretation of the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011). As described, I collected a large quantity of interview and observation data. These data were collected from interviews, texts, field observations, notes, reflections, and stimulated recalls. Using TA allowed me to identify repeated patterns or themes across those data sources and provided a deep, detailed, and nuanced account of particular aspects of the topic. Moreover, TA is favorable for qualitative research that informs policy development and improvement because of its flexibility and ability to deal with large quantity of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). One of the focuses of this study was the impact of the currently implemented teaching reform on instructors' pedagogical decisions. TA was especially favorable in this regard. Given these advantages, I used TA in my data analysis.

When I analyzed the data, I referred to the 6-step TA model of Braun and Clarke's (2006) as well as Saldana's (2009) coding methods. First of all, I sat down and immersed myself in the data, reading them again since familiarity with all aspects of the data was necessary for the generation of a detailed and deep analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After familiarizing myself with the data, I picked out the recurring comments and

topics that emerged. The noteworthy ideas or features I found from these comments and topics were listed, identified and divided into categories and subsequently grouped under themes (Patton, 2002). Based on the list, I generated my initial codes. This coding process of organizing the data into meaningful groups was a part of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2009). During this process, an “open coding” approach was applied to ensure that most of the potential themes related to my study focuses were included (Marriam, 2009). I used Dedoose, an online qualitative analysis software program, to code my data. I chose Dedoose because it was not only less expensive, but also easier to learn compared to other analysis software, such as NVivo.

After generating the initial codes and coding the data accordingly, I sorted and combined the codes under certain themes and collated the relevant coded extracts within the themes. These candidate themes and extracts were re-read, contemplated, and revised when needed. Then, these identified and refined themes were defined and analyzed. The essence of each theme to possess and the aspects of the data to capture were clearly identified. Then a detailed analysis of each theme was generated. This analysis was composed of a story of the theme, the relation between the theme and the research questions or other themes, and the importance of this theme for my understanding of the whole story. Finally, a written report of the analysis and findings was produced. It provided a concise, coherent, and logic account of the study supported by sufficient and persuasive data.

By starting with a deductive mindset and then expanding to an inductive analysis, the study allowed for unforeseen themes to emerge and thus provided a thorough description of instructor participants’ practices. More importantly, it also

brought to light how instructor participants' practices and decisions were constructed within a certain context where a national teaching reform was implemented. Besides the impact of contextual factors, the impact of their personal attitudes, cultural knowledge, and culture teaching pedagogies were also investigated. Implications were established for instructors, school administrators, teacher training programs, and policy-makers.

3.5 Researcher Positioning and Study Limitations

This qualitative multi-case study is not without limitations. First, it used TA (Thematic Analysis) as the method of data analysis. As I have mentioned in the previous section, TA has many advantages that were very helpful for the study. However, it is not without limitations as an analytical tool. For example, the flexibility of this method, which is beneficial for involving various analytical options, can be disadvantageous when it brings difficulty to researchers to decide what aspects of the broad data to focus on. To avoid this pitfall, I developed a framework for picking up data as the existing research (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011) suggests. The framework aligned the data collected from various sources with the research questions. Referring back to the framework rigorously and consistently during the analysis, I was able to be aware what I needed to focus on for this study on culture teaching. For example, the data collected in the second phase of instructor interviews were aligned with my research questions in the following map:

Table 4. Alignment of Research Questions and Data

Research Questions	Data collected to answer this question
1. How do the four Chinese teachers of English	Class observations Field notes & reflections

include culture in their university-level EFL classes?	<p>Final-term exams</p> <p>Interviews of participants: *Protocol 1. Section 5, 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 5. Teacher's reflection on own implementation of culture teaching • Section 1. Participants' general learning and teaching background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Question 4. Could you describe the College English classes that you are teaching? It could be the enrollment of the students, the content and progresses of the classes, the textbooks/curriculum or materials that you use, the forms of evaluations, or anything about the way that you teach the class. <p>Interview of the dean: Section 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 5. Dean's perception of Teachers' implementation of culture teaching and reform initiatives <p>Textbooks and reference books</p> <p>Final-term exams</p>
2. How do these instructors' perspectives on culture teaching and	<p>Interviews of participants: Protocol 1. Section 1, 2, 3, 4, 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 1. Participants' general learning and

<p>their pre-existing cultural knowledge inform their curriculum and instruction decisions?</p>	<p>teaching background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2. Teacher's cultural knowledge and attitudes towards culture teaching • Section 3. Teacher's culture learning experience • Section 4. Teacher's culture training experience • Section 5. Teacher's reflection on own implementation of culture teaching <p>After-class simulated recalls</p>
<p>3. How do the EFL reform initiatives in China impact their decisions?</p>	<p>Interview of participants: Protocol 1. Section 6, 7, 8, 9, 10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 6. Teacher's understanding of the attitudes of the department toward culture teaching • Section 7. Teacher's understandings of the Reform and interpretation of the new cultural component in the <i>Requirements</i> • Section 8. Teacher's perception of the implementation of the new policy • Section 9. Teacher's understanding of the attitudes of the department toward the new policy • Section 10. Overall Feedback and suggestions for implementation of the new policies <p>After-class simulated recalls</p>

	<p>Interview of college dean: Protocol 2. Section 2, 3, 4,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2. Dean's knowledge about culture teaching and Attitudes toward it • Section 3. Dean's knowledge and interpretation of the English Education Reform <p>Section 4. Knowledge and interpretation of the new culture component in the <i>Requirements</i> Interview of policy-maker: Protocol 3. Section 2, 3, 4, 5, 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 2. Creation of the new policy (the <i>Requirements</i>) • Section 3. Interpretation of the new cultural component in the new policy • Section 4. Cultural framework • Section 5: Teaching Guidelines • Section 6. Implementation of the new cultural component <p>Textbooks and reference books</p>
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*See Appendix B, C, and D for observation and interview instruments which reference these section numbers.

Another limitation of this study was my positionality as the researcher. Because I have similar teaching and learning experience as the four instructor participants, I positioned myself as a community insider. I received my Bachelor of English Language and Literature from the School of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the ZU. After

my graduation, I taught College English courses at another university in the same city for six years. Like Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argued, being a community insider allows the researcher many benefits, such as easy acceptance, rapid relationship building, a high level of sensitivity to the context, and a (potentially) deep understanding of participant's thinking and behaviors.

The benefits of being a community insider were fully manifested in my case. For example, the time that I spent building up relationships with my participants was far less than I expected. Actually every time I was introduced to the potential participants as an alumnus by my friends, they always gave me a cordial welcome. They took me as “a member” of their group (他们的一员) especially when they knew that I graduated from the ZU. This relationship was described in Chinese as “自来熟” (be familiar automatically). After building up a good relationship, both my instructor participants and I felt relaxed throughout the study. My participants were fully cooperative. They welcomed me to observe their teaching; they shared their opinions on most of the issues that I studied.

The position of an insider also helped myself feel relaxed both when interacting with my participants and stepping in their classrooms. Having similar teaching and learning experience, I found there were many topics that I could share with my participants. Being an insider also helped me understand their behaviors and thoughts easily. For example, when Chang told me that he did not have enough time to prepare for his culture teaching activities, I knew to what he was referring. All instructors of EFL had the same problem of a heavy workload. I knew this fact because I had to teach 18 classes per week when I was in China. I fully understood how exhausting it could be.

I also knew that there was another reason that brought my participants stress. In Chinese universities, besides teaching, all instructors were expected to have academic publications each year. Instructors had to spend a lot of time doing research. They always struggled to find a balance between teaching and research. Similar teaching and learning experiences helped me understand my participants and build relationships with them.

It was also because of my position as the community insider that I had access to the Dean of the School as well as to the Advisory Board. Both of the professors were of top professions in China. Usually it is very hard to find opportunities to sit with them and have conversation. I obtained the opportunity to interview them with the help of my personal network; as an alumnus of the school, I had friends who had a connection to the Dean. After being introduced to the Dean and building up a good relationship with him, he connected me to the Advisory Board. In this process, my insider position played a decisive role.

However, as the research (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) indicates, being a community insider fosters problems as well, such as pre-existing assumptions of the context and participants. These problems might have emerged in my study and impeded my understanding and interpretation of what I heard or observed. My method for resolving such problems was to position myself as a community outsider simultaneously. It helped me stay aware of the uniqueness of the study context and participants, and stay relatively objective when interpreting and analyzing my data.

I positioned myself as a community outsider also because of the status that my identity as a “Ph.D. student studying at a prestigious American university” implied. My

participants admired that I had got the opportunity to pursue a Ph.D. degree and receive professional training on doing research in the U.S. For them, I was an ‘expert’ in my field. They thought that what I studied must be very important and meaningful for the EFL education in China. This was another reason for my participants’ willingness to participate in my study aside from my identity as an alumnus of the School.

Besides positioning myself as both community insider and outsider, I kept reflections on each step of my research in order to identify and reduce my potential biases and pre-existing assumptions when collecting and analyzing my data. Critiques and feedback from my advisor, colleagues, and other professors in my program were also very helpful in mitigating problems that I met.

The third limitation of the current study was related to the way that I recruited my participants. As described in chapter three, all my participants were included through my personal network. Among the instructors whom my friends introduced to me, I had to select those who showed strong interest in my study as well as willingness to be observed and interviewed. As a case study and using convenient samples recruited via the researcher’s social network, the findings have limited referential meanings and cannot represent all the instructors teaching in the Department.

CHAPTER IV

Study Results

The key objective of this study was to find how and why culture was included in the university-level EFL classes at ZU in China. To investigate how culture was integrated into the class, I observed, recorded, and analyzed four instructors' classroom teaching. Their teaching focuses, cultural content, and culture teaching methods were identified and analyzed with the framework about culture teaching in FL classroom. I used interviews to explore why culture was included in the ways that it was. The instructors' cultural conceptions, attitudes toward culture teaching, pre-existing culture knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, interpretations of the new policies, and perceptions of the School's attitudes towards culture teaching as well as the new policies were analyzed through the lens of my theoretical framework, Constructivism. The interviews were incorporated with classroom observations to explore how those factors listed above contributed to the instructors' curriculum and instructional decisions regarding culture teaching. The perspectives of Professor Jia, one of the leaders of composers of the nation-wide Reform policies, and Professor Hu, Dean of the School of Foreign Languages and Literatures at ZU, on culture teaching and the new policies were also included to triangulate the analysis of instructors' perspectives and practice.

In this chapter, I will report the findings developed from the above analyses, which are unfolded in the sequence of answers to the four research questions. First, I will describe results about the cultural content that the instructors taught. I gathered information about what they taught by observing the instructors' classes 24 times, by interviewing them, and by checking the textbooks that they used. Recall that I define

cultural content according to the 3Ps dimensions described in the *Standards* (2006), I categorize those culture-related topics that I identified into three groups: cultural practices, products, and perspectives. In my analysis, I will focus on the way that the instructors included their cultural content. Questions like what sources the instructors' cultural content came from, what methods they used, and what model of teaching they followed will be answered. Finally, I will investigate the potential factors which had impact on instructors' pedagogical decisions regarding culture teaching. These factors included instructors' attitudes toward culture teaching, their pre-existing cultural knowledge, the reform initiatives, and the School's attitudes toward culture teaching as well as the new policies. According to constructivist theories and existing research, the instructors' pedagogical decisions were the results of an incorporation of the insider and outsider forces. The environment and outside forces, such as the Reform, as Glasersfeld (2005) described, can only act on the instructors through relating to instructors' pre-existing knowledge, experience, or perspectives on the issue

4.1 What cultural content do the four instructors include in their classes?

This section provides answers to the first research question while highlighting differences and similarities in the cultural content included by the four instructor participants.

The observations of classes (48 hours) showed that discussions on culture-related topics were generally conducted in the instructor participants' classrooms. Various topics (Table 5) were covered, including educational systems in the U.K., traditional architecture in China, house construction in the U.S., cigars produced in Cuba, religious buildings in Rome, TV shows in Germany, fairy tales in Denmark, pop music in Korea,

etc. Table 5 does not, however, show the degree to which the topics were explored in class, only that these were the topics that instructors brought into their teaching during the times I was observing. The quantity and diversity of the cultural content that each instructor covered will be analyzed in the following section.

Table 5. Cultural Content Included

Participant	Cultural Topics
Cai	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Phantom of the Opera</i> 2. American opera singer Sarah Brightman 3. Beatles 4. Celebrity autobiographies 5. University of Sheffield 6. Educational systems in the U.K. 7. Traditional architecture in China 8. House building in the U.S. 9. Cigars produced in Cuba 10. Religious buildings in Rome 11. German TV shows 12. An American singing competition “The Voice,” 13. Fairytale of Denmark 14. Pop music in Korea 15. <i>The Dream of Red Mansion</i>, a Chinese literary masterpiece 16. American TV soap operas 17. Neanderthal

	18. Paid vacation in Western countries
	19. Western luxury brands
	20. Parody in English literacy
	21. Ukraine maniacs
	22. British TV show “Talents of British”
	23. Theories of Sigmund Freud
	24. Religious song “Gaels’ Blessing”
	25. Tradition of wearing wigs in ancient Europe
	26. Jewish people
	27. English proverbs
	28. Book of <i>Postmodernist Poetics</i> , <i>Gone with the Wind</i>
	29. Verdi’s operas
	30. Indian Caster social system
	31. Scandal of William Jefferson Clinton
	32. Ancient European architecture
	33. Paintings of Da Vinci
	34. Mo Yan, a Chinese author who won the Noble Prize in Literature
	35. Collectivism and individualism
	36. Western women’s beliefs about marriage
	37. Scandal of the King of Spain
	38. Application for a law school in the U.S.
	39. Film of the Da Vinci Code
	40. Film of Twilight

	41. western Anatomy 42. Oscar Wild 43. Barbell cartoon Company 44. Blue collar workers in the West
Lu	1. <i>Home on the Range</i> , an American song 2. Christmas traditions 3. Gothic churches 4. Greek fairytales 5. typical architectures in several countries 6. Westerners' hobbies of DIY furniture 7. a perspective to look at historical events 8. the documentary of Zheng Hu's expeditionary voyages
Chang	1. Western family structures 2. Western architecture 3. news about campus violence 4. Nostalgia in literature, 5. Chinese poems 6. Westerners' family values 7. Hometown 8. relationship within Western families
Yang	1. <i>Home on the Range</i> , an American song 2. <i>Good luck Charlie</i> , an American TV soap opera 3. typical architecture of the U.S.

4.1.1 Cai

The class observations and interviews showed that, among the four instructors, Cai was the one who taught culture most frequently and broadly. In his 12 observed classes, around one fourth of his class time was spent discussing culture-related topics. No other instructor invested so much time into culture teaching as Cai did. Cai included 44 culture-related topics. This amount of cultural topics greatly exceeded those of the other three instructors which were 8, 8, and 3 respectively.

Cai was also the one who included much content beyond the textbooks or the uniform curriculum. Among the 44 topics that he taught, only 7 came from the texts or vocabulary, including the housing building in the U.S., Neanderthal (an extinct species of human widely distributed in ice-age Europe), the religious song “Gael’s Blessing,” traditional architecture in China, English proverbs, the book *Postmodernist Poetics*, Collectivism and individualism, and Oscar Wilde. The other 35 cultural topics were all included according to his personal interest in these topics. Cai said that he was very willing to teach more cultural content:

学语言，学生他们是应该多学一点文化知识... 所以我上课会尽量多加一点相关的知识...

when learning the foreign language, the students need to learn the culture of the target language... therefore, I always try to integrate more culture instruction into the classes...

The culture-related topics included in Cai’s class were very broad, ranging from the *Phantom of the Opera* produced by Hollywood to the Chinese literacy masterpiece of *Dream of Red Mansions*, from British educational systems to Western women’s

family values, and from Western luxury brands to German TV shows. He did not confine his teaching to culture of a specific country (e.g., the U. S.).

The cultural content that Cai included was not confined to any aspects of culture either. All the three dimensions of culture described in the *Standards* (National Standards Project, 2006) were covered, but culture practices and products were preferred to culture perspectives. It was also found that the vast majority of the topics were composed of observable cultural facts instead of deep understanding of the culture or people living in the culture. This echoes the findings of existing research which claims that transmission of observable cultural knowledge is the primary focus of the culture teaching in traditional FL classroom (Brooks, 1975; Hadley, 1993; Zhou, 2011). More recent approaches present culture as a process of understanding and negotiating meaning rather than static facts. Students should be provided opportunities to construct their own knowledge and understanding of the target culture(s) through investigations and interactions (Abrams, 2002). In Cai's classes, the primary teaching approach was teacher-centered transmission-oriented instruction and "culture as facts." Most of the culture-related topics were revealed by Cai's presentations. In other words, Cai just spoke about what he knew about the topics. No other materials or activities were provided to support his presentations.

Among the topics, a few about cultural perspectives were included. One example was Cai's analysis of Western and Chinese women's beliefs in marriage. Cai started with the word "bachelor" which was listed in the vocabulary of the text. He introduced the meaning and pronunciation of it, then expanded his teaching by saying:

"bachelor," it refers to a man who is not married, so what do we call a woman

who has not been married? ...yes! 老处女，用英语怎么说?correct, it is “virgin”, or we call it “spinster” ... ok, I think women in the West are different from women in China, 其他西方国家的女人都是很独立的，她们可不依赖于男人，比中国女人独立多了-中国女人一过了二十三四还没结婚就急的要死，觉得她们自己嫁不出去了...这是思想不同，他们（西方女人）认为，是去寻找真爱，并不是说想自己急着嫁出去，他们不在乎别人怎么说.....

“bachelor,” it refers to a man who is not married, so what do we call a woman who has not been married? ...yes! what is the word in English for a virgin?correct, it is “virgin”, or we call it “spinster” ... ok, I think women in the West are different from women in China, women in the West are independent of men, they are more independent than Chinese women - they do not rely on men, Chinese women feel desperately anxious when they cannot get married at 23 or 24...it is the difference in marriage beliefs, they (Western women) emphasize love instead of an eagerness to get married, they care less about how others look at them...

In this discourse, culture instruction was developed from and integrated into language instruction. Cai tried to interpret the perspective of Western women on the issue of marriage. However, what he taught was not supported by any authentic materials and seemed to be improvised, albeit awkwardly, after defining the word “bachelor” as an unmarried man. Cai’s instruction drew on his own viewpoints, uninformed by any insider perspectives which might had helped him find commonly used words for unmarried women, or views about being single. The interview with him indicated that Cai’s cultural knowledge mainly came from the reading or stories shared by his parents

or friends. He said,

我的文化知识还是非常丰富的... 虽然我没有出过国, 但是我父母都是艺术家, 他们一直很鼓励我学习文化方面的东西, 而且我自己也很感兴趣, 很喜欢看这方面的书, 我的一些同事朋友出国回来也会讲一些出去的见闻...

my cultural knowledge is very very sufficient... I have never been abroad, but my parents are both artists, they always encourage me to learn cultures, and I am personally very interested in cultural subjects, I have read much about culture, I also heard a lot about foreign cultures from my colleagues and friends who had been abroad...

Because his cultural knowledge mainly came from what he heard from others, much of what he shared with the students was incomplete, or not complemented by any materials or pedagogical processes for exploring a range of viewpoints on a practice, perspective or products. This finding is similar to those of previous research (Byram et al. 1991; Kurogi, 1998) which has reported that in the traditional language classrooms, culture teaching usually unfolds through the teacher's delivery of the facts presented with anecdotal information or teacher's personal impression of the issue. The result of this sort of improvised integration of cultural "facts" in Cai's case was that he stereotyped the women from both West and East. It is obvious that these cultural issues needed to be further unpacked rather than just delivered to the students as facts. As Kramsch (1998) suggests, it is more important for the teacher to negotiate cultural understandings with the students rather than to transmit what he/she knows about the topic.

Another example of Cai's inclusion of cultural perspectives occurred when he was teaching students to differentiate "sexy", "cute," and "sweet". He said,

那么国外人说这个男人很性感，就是sexy, 那如果很年轻的，吸引人的，都是用什么词？... 不用sexy，那用什么呀？... cute, 对，cute... sweet 指的是“小甜心”，指更年轻的，反正不是Guo你这种呀，也不是我she我这个样子年轻20岁可以，年轻20岁，就是10岁的时候 ... 国外的人在性关系上思想比我们开放，称赞异性的时候很大方，喜欢就是喜欢，不会伪装，因为他们觉得这没有什么的，很正常的需求嘛，比如你看那个综艺节目里边，比方说我看到的那个the Voice，“美国好声音”，Emilia, Cristina, 这个Cristina看了一个小帅哥唱歌，唱歌完了以后，她就是直接就说了一句：“哎呀我不光想看你唱歌，我还想看你脱裤子的样子”，直接就说出来了，恩，直接就说出来了<那没有什么的，我觉得人家很真嘛，你看人家多大方，就没把这当个事，喜欢就直接说出来...

then we use “sexy” to describe a man who is attractive, so how do we describe a young man who is attractive?...yes, it is “cute,” we use cute to refer to young men... sweet? “sweet” means honey, it is usually used to refer to younger persons, like me, oh, I was “cute” 20 years ago, or at least 10 years ago... anyway, the foreigners are more open than us toward sex, they are very direct when praising the opposite sex, they think it is normal and legitimate, not inappropriate, there is no need to refrain the appreciation for an attractive girl/boy, like Emilia, Cristina, who participated in “the Voice,” a singing competition in the U.S., when she was attracted by a young and handsome male contestant, she said directly, “I like to watch you when you are singing; I like more to watch you when you are naked,” see, so direct! she did not think talking

about such topics in public was embarrassing...

In this discourse, Cai tried to interpret the issue from the perspective of “Westerners.”

Due to his limited culture knowledge and experience, he was not in a good position to

explain how the people from the target culture looked at sex. He did not provide

opportunities to the students to explore the issue by themselves. Consequently, Cai

stereotyped “Westerners” again. Perhaps the most problematic part of this excerpt is that

Cai was not reflective or cognizant of his gaps in how to teach culture or how to talk

about culture. He told me in the interview that teaching culture was just to deliver the

cultural facts that he knew to the students. Cai was very confident in his cultural

knowledge, in the absence of experience, or materials that would give more or different

perspectives on the culturally-grounded uses of English vocabulary. He said in the

interview:

教文化的東西嘛，我從來都不準備的，有什麼可準備的，想到哪就講到哪

啊...

I have never done a preparation (for culture teaching), it is not necessary, I just

speak out what jumps into my mind at the moment...

Cai’s excessive confidence in personal cultural knowledge led to another

problem in his teaching. It was the “impromptu instruction.” Because of lacking

preparation and design, Cai’s culture instruction was usually unorganized and full of

misconceptions and stereotypes. The problem, however, is not in the teacher’s lack of

experience or knowledge, because all language teachers face this problem. The problem,

as I see it, is in the pedagogical and curricular approach to not knowing. It would be so

much more effective for Cai to explore cultural assertions/stereotypes *with* students,

rather than impose his unexamined ideas about vastly different cultures *on* students.

According to Stoller and Grabe (1997), when deciding what to teach, the first consideration need to be given to “an array of student needs, student goals, institutional expectations, available resources, teacher abilities, and expected final performance outcomes” (p. 4) rather than the instructor’s personal preference. Only when this criteria are specified, the content that integrated can be expected to contribute to students’ learning.

Regarding his classroom practice, Cai was the one who included the most culture-related topics and mentioned culture the most frequently. However, including a large quantity of culture-related topics did not mean that his class had culture teaching objectives. First, most of his topics were not developed from the textbooks or the curriculum. They seemed to be inserted into the class casually according to the Cai’s personal interest rather than being thoughtfully prepared and integrated. Second, these topics were mainly presented by Cai’s with anecdotal information or his personal knowledge of the issue instead of through authentic materials or student inquires or other widely-accepted ways of teaching culture. Third, Cai’s introduction to the topics was seldom followed by other teaching activities, such as student discussions, to enforce students’ understanding of the topics. Students’ learning of those topics was seldom assessed as well. It was hard to know how much that they had understood the content. It was also hard to know if they agreed on the instructor’s interpretation of the cultural issues because no one challenged Cai’s stereotypical assumptions. In summary, Cai involved much culture-related content in his classes. However, like so many other language teachers, his teaching approach was not likely to lead to nuanced learning of

self or others. Additionally, and also documented in the literature, language learning is assessed, not culture learning, which naturally results in less time and effort going into exploring culture(s) systematically.

4.1.2 Lu

Like Cai's, Lu's teaching was not confined to any specific cultures either. However, in the hours I observed, she did not include as much cultural content as Cai did. In 12 classes, 8 culture-related topics were identified, including the American song "Home on the Range," traditions of Christmas, Gothic churches, a Greek fairy tale, Western architecture, Westerners' hobbies of DIY furniture, a perspective to look at historical events, and a documentary of Zheng Hu's expeditionary voyages to the East Africa in Ming Dynasty produced by the Discovery Channel. Among these topics (i.e., the American song, Gothic churches, the Greek fairy tale, Western architecture, the documentary of Zheng Hu's voyages), many were developed from content of the standardized curriculum. The historical perspective was expanded from the content of the text. Only the traditions of Christmas did not come from the textbooks. It was included because the day of the class was Christmas. Lu thought it was a good opportunity to talk about that holiday. In summary, the textbooks and reference books were the primary sources for Lu's cultural content. This was totally different from the case of Cai, who added his own commentary extemporaneously, and without prior planning.

A similarity between Lu and Cai was that they preferred to include cultural products and practices over cultural perspectives. This finding should come as no surprise given the decades of well-documented research on the teaching of culture in FL

classrooms, which notoriously has focused on the superficial aspects of foods, festivals, etc. The majority of Lu's culture-related topics unfolded through her description of cultural "facts." The values, norms, or beliefs behind these facts were seldom introduced. For example, when teaching about Gothic churches, Lu put focus on the description of the characteristics of Gothic architecture, such as its pointed arches, large expanses of colored glasses, and stone structure. The origin, history, or development of this architecture, as well as its political and religious influence which might help the students understand the characteristics of Gothic architecture were not probed. This aligns with what Moraine (1997) found that cultural perspectives, which are more intangible, are not easily introduced by FL teachers.

In Lu's classes, some inclusion of cultural perspectives occurred. For example, when teaching a text about a peasant uprising that happened in England, Lu expanded the discussion by integrating English and Chinese:

ok, let's look back to page 88, let's look at the text together, since this text is about history, I want to talk about history... do you remember the question that I have asked? that, what is "historical fact?" what is history? someone told me that the history is something that happened in the past, right? but I also asked you whether something that happened really in the past, will necessarily become a piece of historical event, or historical fact, is a, you didn't answer me <it, it had been, it have, it has been a long belief that the history mean something happening in the past ... 在过去, 历史主义学家他们认为, 历史事件, 是不依赖于人所产生的, 它本来就是有这些事件<这是旧历史主义, 它就是历史有一个自在的系统, 那后来新的西方的历史主义就认为不是这样, 他们觉

得 (in the last century, the historians regarded historical events as happenings independent of people, they existed by themselves <it was the traditional historical perspective, however, the new historical perspective from the West is different, the new perspective claims that), because we have no access to the past events, so we have no way to get the information of the past things except the thing we learn from the historians, who will judge the historical events by their own opinions, so their opinions about the past will influence the fact itself <can you catch me? 那么新历史主义它就认为我们现在无法回到过去, 那么我们对过去发一个认知只能是通过现在的历史学家对于过去的一个阐释, < “interpretation,” 就是阐释! <so, like what Foucault says, we need to be aware that what we know about history is interpreted by others, 所以当我们在看这些被阐释过的历史事件时, 得注意到他们都有一定主观性, 也就是说, 如果从不同的角度去阐释, 历史事件就可能呈现不同的样子, 这就是我们看待历史事件时候应该有的态度 (the new historical perspective thinks that we cannot go back to the past to experience the events, so what we know now is based on someone’s interpretations of the events, “interpretation,” uh this word is very important, you need to know this word <you need to know this word, it means to interpret <so, like what Foucault says, we need to be aware that what we know about history is interpreted by others, so when we read the materials of a historical event, we need to be aware that they are interpretations of others, there must be some subjectivity, in other words, the event can be interpreted in various perspectives, this is what we need to know when reading the history)...

In this discourse, Lu tried to teach the students to look at the history from a relatively objective perspective rather than telling them some facts of the culture. As for the rationale to do so, Lu explained in her stimulated recall interview conducted after the class that she thought helping the students think critically was as important as delivering historical knowledge to them. This was consistent with what she thought culture was. In her interviews, she said culture teaching was “not just to teach cultural facts” (不只是文化知识的灌输), but “to develop students’ abilities to look at cultural issues from different perspectives” (而是培养学生从多角度思考问题). Lu’s message to the students seemed unique because neither critical thinking nor cultural perspectives have been thought to be focuses in the classrooms in China (Wen, Wang, Zhao, Liu, & Wang, 2009).

In the above excerpt, Lu strived to integrate cultural perspectives into her teaching and provide a perspective to look at cultural products to the students. This approach is endorsed widely in the literature. According to the literature, effective culture teaching aims to promote students’ culture awareness as well as their culture experience or knowledge (Byram, 1989; Guilherme, 2002; Bennett, 1998; Kramsch, 1993; Paige et al., 2003). However, the teaching was still processed solely through the instructor’s presentation based on her personal knowledge about the issue. This sort of lesson could be elaborated or extended with some authentic materials, interactive activities, or student inquiry had been integrated.

Except for the above teaching excerpt, taken as a whole, Lu’s class was still dominated by the transmission of cultural facts developed from the text and the standardized curriculum. These cultural facts, which were not related to the perspectives

behind them, were usually inserted into vocabulary or text teaching. For example, after explaining the meaning of “echo” as a verb, Lu wrote the word on the board and asked the students:

this word is also the name of a fairy in ancient Greek tales, do you know her?... she is a lovely girl, who fell in love with Narcissus, uh, very handsome young man, and also Zeus < The greatest the god in the Greece legendary? (.)and from many stories we know that he is really <how should I say <loving all kinds of beautiful girls, right? right? and he fell in love with Echo, and you know his wife- the queen of Zeus, she is really jealousy, oh jealous, ok, so when she knew that Zeus fell in love with Echo, she just made a magic thing toward Echo and made her, uh, made her that she could not speak any more, she just could repeat what other have said <can you catch me? <so everyday Narcissus <we know this maybe this one is a very melancholy young man, just came there to look into the face in the river, ok, the reflection of his face in the river, and sometimes he talked to the face in the river, and Echo, she could not tell, she could not tell Narcissus that she loves him, so she has to repeat, she had to repeat what the Narcissus have said, ah had said, right? so that finally Narcissus, fell love with himself...

After telling the story, Lu switched back to vocabulary teaching. She did not conduct any other activities to deepen or examine students’ understanding of the tale. She delivered what she knew about the issue to her students. In the transcript, I was unable to discern what the students were able to understand or learn from this instruction because they were not engaged in follow up opportunities to share or develop their own

understandings of the cultural issue. This finding echoed what Moore (1996) found.

Moore carried out a survey research and indicated that the FL teachers usually preferred using teacher presentation approach to deliver basic cultural facts coming from the textbooks rather than engaging the students in the activities of understanding the target culture deeply.

4.1.3 Chang

In the 12 classes that I observed with Chang, 8 culture-related topics were involved, including family structures, architecture, news about campus violence, nostalgia in literature, poems, family values, hometown, and relationship within families. Like Cai and Lu, Chang relied on teacher-centered transmission-oriented instruction and “culture as facts.” A typical example was how he taught the family structures in Western countries. Chang said:

ok, we finished the text, it was about family, it make me to think about family structures, usually there are two types of families in Western countries, extended and nuclear families, is it right? <yes, extended families, they tend to include several generations, like the parents, grandparents, children, right? ... nuclear families, can you guys tell what a nuclear family is? Li Dong, could you explain “nuclear family?” ...

Li Dong (pseudonym), the student that Chang named, answered that a nuclear family was a family composed of two generations, including the kids and parents. Chang continued his teaching by saying:

yes, correct! nuclear families just include the parents and the children <this situation is, is very different from the situation in China, in China nowadays,

because of the influence of the Industrialization, right? most of the families are nuclear families <the old generation and the young generation, they never live in the same place; even if they live in the same place, they don't live in the same house, right? so the children will live in their own apartment after the marriage with their own children, and I think the most important reason for this trend is the Industrialization...

In his instruction, Chang tried to introduce family structures in Western countries. However, what he taught was presented as cultural facts (e.g., by saying “never” with respect to multiple generations living in the same house) which were based on his personal understanding of the issue. These facts, which were not related to perspectives, such as the family values, were delivered to the students through Chang’s lectures. No authentic materials or proof were incorporated to support his statement. Like what happened in Cai’s and Lu’s classes, no opportunities were provided to the students to explore the issue of Western family structures and obtain deep understanding of it.

This transmission of cultural facts was also used in most of Chang’s classes when he talked about news about campus violence reported in the U.S., nostalgia in English and Chinese literature, typical architecture in the West and China, Westerners’ family values, and relationship within American families. However, interactive learning activities, which were not observed in the classes of Cai or Lu, occurred in Chang’s classes. In the second week of the observation, two student presentation were observed. One was about “Poem of Odyssey” and the other was about “My hometown.” The topics were developed from the texts which were taught in the previous week. The students gave the prepared presentations respectively in the class in English. When each

presentation was accomplished, Chang summarized what the student presented and provided some feedback regarding his/her presenting styles. This inclusion of interactive and student-centered teaching and learning activities was an important difference between Chang's culture teaching and the culture teaching of Cai and Lu. According to the research (Drewelow, 2013; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2003), these culture teaching activities could be elaborated by providing explicit instruction and guidelines on the tasks to the presenters before the presentations and offering constructive feedback to the presenters after the presentations.

The inclusion of interactive and student-centered teaching and learning activities was a key difference between Chang's culture teaching and the culture teaching of Cai and Lu. This will be specifically described in the following sections. Another difference was Chang's emphasis on Chinese culture. According to the class observations, all the instructors evoked Chinese culture in their classes. However, it seldom became the focus of their classes, except for Chang. Chang spent much time talking about Chinese culture. For example, in his second observed class, Chang spent around 20 minutes introducing his hometown, Ping Ba after finishing teaching the text about Nostalgia in Western literacy. Chang displayed pictures of his hometown and said,

nostalgia is not a theme only on the West, in our culture, people also talk about it, Chinese are especially love their families and hometown, now, I am going to talk about my hometown Ping Ba... these pictures are my hometown <don't you think it's beautiful? It is Ping Ba, a small beautiful city located in Guizhou Province in the South of China, I was living there until I was 18 years old and came here to take my college education... this is the city, I especially love the

environment of Ping Ba, I love nature more than the city... everything to me, is so sweet to me in my hometown. (.) and the next page, mountain, right? mountains, we have a lot of mountains in Guizhou Province, it is different from mountains of Sichuan Province, <in Sichuan Province, we have a lot of very big, very high mountains, but in my hometown, the mountains, you know, ranges, they are very, they are not so high, ok, but they are graceful, graceful, and green, very green, right?

In the following 20 minutes, Chang displayed more idyllic pictures of Ping Ba and introduced the local culture, including its geography, history, food, and the national minorities living in that area. The topics included Fanjin Mountain, Huangguoshu Waterfall, Wu river, Fulin pickle, rice rolls, rice noodle, pepper fish, and the clothing, food, and traditions of Buyi nationality. The culture of Ping Ba was displayed in a way which was visual and systematic.

Among the four instructors, Chang was the only one who seemed to plan to integrate Chinese culture in ways that might inspire cultural comparisons. It was impressive because time restriction was the main barrier for all the instructors to include cultural content. Like Chang said:

主要的阻碍，是课时的限制吧，课时太少，要求我们要讲完课本里所有的单元，包括语法，词汇，课文，和课后练习，所以我们没有办法讲更多的文化的东西...

the barriers? the main one I think is the limited class hours, the instructors are required to teach all the vocabulary, text, and exercises in the textbooks, so we do not have time to teach more culture...

Although the time was limited, Chang still included many culture-related content in the class, including both target culture and Chinese culture. This choice was explained in his later interview. I asked him what cultural content he thought to include in the class. His answer was as followed:

主要应该是一些英美文化吧，比如文学，历史人物，还有日常，比如节日，食物，人们的生活方式... 还应该讲一些中国文化，不局限于英美文化... 中国文化对学生来说也很重要，这样经过对比，他们更了解自己的文化，现在好像很提倡讲中国文化，我认为这是对的...

I think it should be the British and American cultures, like the literacy, historical figures, holiday, food, the way of people's life... we also need to teach some Chinese culture, not restricted to British or American cultures... learning Chinese culture is also important for my students, through comparing Chinese culture and the other cultures, they develop deeper understanding of their own culture, I know that Chinese culture is encouraged to teach recently, I think this is good...

Chang was the only instructor who included Chinese culture not only as a tool used to highlight the target culture, but also a subject of the class. He was also the one instructor who articulated the benefits of including Chinese culture. According to the literature, through learning the target culture and relating it to their own culture, the students had an opportunity to create a bridge between their culture and the target culture, and then improve their understanding of culture overall (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Drewelow, 2013; Kramsch, 1993).

After introducing his hometown, Chang asked a female student to prepare a

presentation on her hometown and gave the presentation the following week. This student presentation, together with another two student presentations conducted in Chang's class and one group discussion conducted in Yang's class, were the only observed student-centered and interactive culture learning activities in the current study. This will be discussed in the following section about instructors' culture teaching methods.

In summary, most of the cultural content that Chang taught in the class included what seemed to be cultural facts derived from the curriculum or textbooks. However, what was unique was that he integrated some Chinese culture into the class to promote students' general cultural awareness, an important aspect that the literature encourages teachers to do (Bennett, 1998; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Drewelow, 2013; Paige et al., 2003).

4.1.4 Yang

Yang was the oldest and the one who had been teaching for the largest amount of time among the four instructors. She had been teaching College English courses at ZU for 21 years. She was also the one who had the highest position in the college. She had been promoted to associate professor two years before I met her. The quantity of cultural content that Yang included in the class was the least among the four instructors. In all the observed 12 classes, only three cultural topics were involved, including the typical American architecture, an American song "Home on the Range," and a popular American TV soap opera "Good luck Charlie." The topics of typical American architecture and American song were both expanded from the texts and included in the standardized curriculum. When teaching these two topics, Yang strictly followed what

was prescribed in the curriculum. She told the class:

this passage is an essay, the writer tells us about the different changes happened to the family of an American farm, right? and so, we are going to learn this passage, before that, look at the first part of this passage, it looks like a poem, right? the first part of this passage looks like a poem, actually it's from a song, it's a song called "Home On the Range," <do you know what is a "range"? do you know this vocabulary? (.) <ok, a "range" is a piece of land where animal are feed, to feed animal, "牧场" (farm), 恩 (em), "牧场" (farm), Home on the Range, "牧场是我家" (My home is on the farm), correct? first, let me share the backgrounds of this song... Home on the Range is a state song of = Kansas, Dr. Brewster M. Higley originally wrote this in the poem called My Western Home in the early of his 70s in Kansas, the music was written by a friend of Higley's, named Daniel E. Kelley <Higley's original words are similar to those of the song today but not identical <you can read the song, you can read the words of the song in our textbook, right? in our textbook, now let's see this passage...

The instructor read the first paragraph for the class and said,

"Oh, give me a home where the Buffalo roam", actually that's not the original words, that's not the original words, written by(.) um, Dr. Brewster Higley, but they are similar, they are similar, the song was adopted by settlers, cowboys, and the others and spread across the USA in various forms, the song was officially adopted as the state song of Kansas on June 30, 1947, and is commonly regarded as unofficial anthem of the American West, it's a song about the West of America <now I will play an video of this song, um, for you, and you will, um,

watch it and listen to the music...

Then Yang played the music video of sceneries of the West. After watching the video, she analyzed the text sentence by sentence, focusing on the grammar and vocabulary.

Then she gave a summary of the song and the text:

“Home on the Range,” the West of the U.S., isn’t that beautiful, the environment?

<do you like to have such a home? (.) YES! ok, but do you think we have such a home nowadays? (.) [laughing] NO, why? just because the environment has been changed, right? it’s hard to find such beautiful place in the cities <that’s what the author wants us to know, in this text, he tells us HOW the home was changed < reread this passage after the class, ok? <see you next week!

I checked the textbooks and the curriculum and found that everything she told the students was described in the curriculum. All the materials that she used during the teaching, including writing materials, pictures, and videos, were also provided by the curriculum as well. On one hand, it meant that Yang made good use of the cultural materials provided by the textbooks and curriculum. On the other hand, one might say that her culture teaching was limited by the textbooks and reference books. This aligned with finding of existing research which indicated that the textbooks were the primary sources for the teaching in Chinese FL classrooms (Lessard-Clouston, 1996; Luk, 2012; Wang & Coleman, 2009).

Later when teaching typical American architecture, Yang still strictly followed the unified curriculum and used videos and pictures from the standardized curriculum. The only change that she made was that she assigned the students to conduct group discussions on the topic and share their discussions with the class before she gave her

instruction. Except for the student presentations conducted in Chang's class, this group discussion was the only interactive learning activity that I observed in all the 48 classes of the four instructors, a topic which will be elaborated upon in the following section.

Unlike the "Home on the Range" and American architecture, the American TV soap opera did not come from the standardized curriculum. At the beginning of the class, Yang displayed a clip of the soap opera and told the students:

it is an American TV soap opera about family, I like you to have a look of it since the theme of this unit is home...

After displaying the clips, she named a male student to prepare for a presentation on this soap opera. In the class of the following week, the student gave the presentation, introducing the story and the main characters. After the presentation, Yang supplemented some details of the story. When asked about this in her stimulated recall, Yang explained that she included this topic considering that the unit of the text about "Home." Watching this American TV soap opera would let the students to have a look of the typical American family. Yang's teaching of this topic provided authentic learning materials for the students, which was regarded central to culture teaching (Hadley, 1993; Kramsch, 1993; Kramsch, A'Ness, & Lam, 2000; Luk, 2012; Moore, Morales, & Carel, 1998; Paige, 2003; Valdes, 1986.) but scarce in the FL classrooms in China (Hsu, 2006; Tsou, 2005). However, the materials were used in a very superficial way. She only transformed the facts. Perspectives behind the facts, such as the many different family values among Americans, were not introduced. The students received no opportunities to explore the issue by themselves.

Yang included much less culture-related topics in terms of quantity and

frequency in the observed classes than the other instructors. This to some extent mirrored her attitudes toward culture teaching. In the interviews, Yang agreed on the necessity of culture teaching in the FL classroom, but did not think culture teaching should have an equal position as the language teaching did. For her, culture “was included just to provide background information for text teaching.” Her attitudes seemed to inform her decisions on the frequency of culture inclusion, also a topic for discussion in the next section.

4.1.5 Summary

Despite the differences in the content of culture that the instructors included in the classroom, there were several commonalities in their culture teaching practice. First, all instructors included culture-related topics in their teaching. These topics covered different variants of culture. This diverged from findings of previous research which indicated that American cultures or British cultures dominated the EFL classroom in Asia (Young & Walsh, 2010). Second, no matter how much cultural content the instructors taught, culture was seldom the focus or the main objective of the instructors’ classes. The language, grammar and vocabulary in particular, was usually the primary focus. Third, the main resources for the culture-related content were the textbooks or standardized curriculum. This finding aligned with the existing research which indicated that the textbooks were the predominant source of the teachers’ cultural content (Moore, 1996; Wang & Coleman, 2009). However, personal opinions and assertions from the teachers also emerged frequently in the data. Fourth, while no instructors confined their teaching to specific cultures, cultures of various countries or areas were often lumped together and named “the Western culture.” The instructors did not offer students any

subtlety about the diversity within cultures, despite readily available evidence of this among students themselves. According to the literature, lacking clear cultural conceptions might impede teachers from teaching more cultural content (Byrd et al., 2011). Fifth, the class observations indicated that the vast majority of the cultural topics included fell into the categories of cultural practice and products, which echoed what Moraine's (1997) finding that cultural perspectives were much less taught by FL teachers. Although topics about cultural practices and products were usually excluded from cultural perspectives, there were some topics, such as the American singing competition "the Voice" which were intertwined with mentioning of the perspectives (American people's ideas about being sexy).

The above were the commonalities that the four instructors shared when including culture-related content in the classrooms. The next section will describe findings about the methods they used when including the cultural content.

4.2 What methods do the instructors use when they include cultural content?

Besides findings on what cultural content was included, the classroom observations also revealed the way that the content was included. I found that teacher presentations, online cultural resources, dialogical interactions, and cultural comparisons were all employed by the instructors when teaching culture in the classroom.

4.2.1 Teacher presentation

Although I saw many different and often interactive pedagogical approaches to teach language in the classes, the traditional teacher presentation approach was found to be the primary one through which most of the observed culture-related teaching was processed. Among the 63 cultural topics included by the instructors, 48 (Table 6) were

presented through teacher presentations and without any supplemental activities. It means that all these topics were introduced by the instructors. After the introductions, no student activities, such as group discussions, were conducted. This echoed the findings of the existing research which indicated that the traditional teaching of cultural knowledge was still valued and influential in Chinese EFL classes (Wang & Coleman, 2009).

Table 6. Cultural content delivered through teacher presentations

Participant	Topics
Cai	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Phantom of the Opera</i> 2. American opera singer Sarah Brightman 3. Beatles 4. Western celebrities' autobiographies 5. Educational systems in the U.K. 6. House construction in the U.S. 7. Cigars produced in Cuba 8. An American singing competition "The Voice," 9. Fairy tales of Denmark 10. Pop music in Korea 11. <i>The Dream of Red Mansion</i> 12. American TV soap operas 13. Neanderthal 14. Paid vacation in Western countries 15. Western luxury brands

	16. Parody in English literacy 17. Theories of Sigmund Freud 18. Tradition of wearing wigs in ancient Europe 19. Jewish people 20. English proverbs 21. The book of <i>Postmodernist Poetics</i> 22. <i>Gone with the Wind</i> 23. Verdi's operas 24. Indian Caster social system 25. The scandal of William Jefferson Clinton 26. Paintings of Da Vinci 27. Mo Yan, a Chinese author who won the Noble Prize in Literature 28. Western women's believes in marriage 29. Scandal of the King of Spain 30. Application for a law school in the U.S 31. Film of <i>the</i> Da Vinci Code 32. Film of Twilight 33. Western Anatomy 34. Oscar Wild 35. Barbell cartoon Company 36. Blue collars in the West
Lu	1. Traditions on Christmas 2. Greek fairy tales

	3. Westerners' hobbies of DIY furniture 4. A perspective to look at historical events
Chang	1. Western family structures 2. News about campus violence 3. Chinese poems 4. Westerners' family values 5. Relationship within Western families
Yang	NONE

Among the four instructors, Cai was the one who relied most heavily on teacher presentations when teaching the culture. Thirty six out of forty four of his cultural topics were processed through his presentations. Authentic audio or video materials were much less frequently used in his teaching. In the stimulated recall interviews, he explained it was because he had strong confidence in his personal knowledge about cultural issues, which fully supported his culture teaching practice. Also because of this confidence, Cai “had never prepared for” (从不准备的) his culture teaching. His cultural instruction was “always the spur of the moment” (都是一时兴起). He inserted cultural content arbitrarily into the classes whenever he liked. For example, on one occasion when Cai talked about Westerners' family values, he abruptly jumped to a discussion on ethnic characteristics of Jews and Indians:

西方人都是小家庭，不会几代人住在一起，他们比较喜欢独立，犹太人就不一样，他们跟我们中国有点象，都是大家族式的，你还别说，犹太人都长的挺漂亮的，大眼睛高鼻梁，印度人也是，尤其是种姓高的，你们知

道种姓吧？就是他们的社会阶层，据说种姓高的长的也好看，象我这种塌鼻子，要是在印度绝对是低种姓的...

the Westerners like small families, generations do not live in a house, they like to be independent, Jewish are different, they are similar to traditional Chinese, you know the traditional Chinese like to live together with the grandparents and grandchildren, the Jewish look pretty, their eyes are big and their bridges of the nose are high, the Indian people, in particular those with high status in their Caste system, look pretty too, however, people like me who do not look beautiful, must be at the bottom of the Caster in India [laughing]...

In this excerpt, Cai included topics of Westerners' family values, Jewish people's appearance, and Indian Caste system. These topics were presented as cultural facts with anecdotal information consisting of stories of Cai's personal knowledge of the target culture as an outsider. No additional, much less authentic materials were integrated into this process to support his arguments or deepen students' understanding. As the literature indicates, this information transmission approach dominated many FL classrooms (Byram et al. 1991; Kurogi, 1998). A problem of this way of integrating culture was that it seemed to do little to inspire inquiry among the students.

In my observations, I never saw any student-centered culture learning activities happening in Cai's classes. All his culture-related teaching was processed through teacher presentations like the above. I have no data indicating that students learned about culture through this approach because students did not produce any reflection, project, analysis, etc. As Moore (1996) indicates, this problem exists in many FL classrooms where the teachers give lectures to deliver basic cultural facts rather than facilitating

students to scaffold their own understanding or perspectives on the culture-related issues. Scholars like Kramsch (1993) and Moore (1996) suggest teachers to shift the classroom from teacher presentation to students' exploration and engage students in the learning process. In contrast, Cai modelled to students only one way of understanding cultural diversity or difference which reified an essentializing way of understanding vastly different and diverse cultures.

The teacher presentation was also the teaching approach preferred by Lu and Chang. Four out of eight cultural topics in Chang's classes and five out of eight cultural topics in Lu's classes were processed through this teaching approach. Like Cai, when using this approach to teach cultural issues, the primary resource that Chang and Lu relied on was their personal experience or knowledge. For example, when teaching about Western families, Lu told her students:

外国人不光重视家庭，他们还很喜欢自己动手做家具，自己装修呢，很多外国人都热衷于做木工活啊，我在上海的宜家店里就看到很多老外买DIY的材料和工具，他们有的人甚至自己造个船什么的，我认识一个朋友，她就说她在国外的房东就自己造船...

the foreigners spend much time with their families, they also spent time making furniture or decorating the houses by themselves, many foreigners like to DIY stuff, I saw many foreigners selecting DIY materials and instruments in Ikea when I was in Shanghai, some of the foreigners even DIY boats, a friend told me that she watched her landlord making a boat when she was living in the U.S....

In this excerpt, Lu described what she had observed. She did not provide any explanation for her observations (i.e., perspectives) or any materials that would help students explore this phenomenon.

The case of Yang was different. All the three cultural topics that she involved in her classes were processed through teacher presentations incorporated with other approaches such as authentic materials, student presentation, or student discussions. When discussing the song of Home On the Range, Yang displayed a music video about the song before giving instruction; when talking about American families, she displayed an American TV soap opera about family, asked students to do group discussions, and asked a student to introduce the story and characters of the opera; when teaching American architecture, she showed pictures of American houses and displayed a video clip in which there were scenes of American houses.

Unlike the other instructors, Yang did not rely on presentations of her own knowledge about the issues when teaching the above cultural content. Instead, she incorporated teaching with audio or visual authentic materials. Student-centered learning activities, including group discussions and a student presentation were also included by her to inspire student inquiries. This was close to commonly accepted concept of culture teaching. However, her teaching could have been elaborated by involving more content about cultural perspectives. For example, after the student presented on the TV soap about an American family, Yang could put forward questions for the students to discuss, leading them to understand what norms or values leading to the family members' behaviours. As the *Standards* (1999) suggests, helping students understand the relationship between cultural practices and perspectives, and the relationship between

cultural products and perspectives should be one of the main teaching objectives of FL classrooms.

The above analysis of the instructors' teaching supported the findings of existing research that teacher presentation was the primary culture teaching approach in many Chinese EFL classes (Wang & Coleman, 2009). The instructors usually shared their knowledge or personal experiences on specific cultural issues with the students through applying this teaching approach. An excessive reliance on teacher presentations and the lack of authentic materials brought many problems, such as impromptu instruction and stereotypes, also topics for discussion in the next chapter.

4.2.2 Cultural comparisons

Besides teacher presentations, cultural comparisons were also used by the instructors when teaching culture-related content. According to the literature, putting the target culture and students' own culture side by side and observing how people think or behave from a different perspective helps disaffirm students' ethnic stereotypical representations of the target culture and people. It also helps students develop deeper understandings of the target culture and their own culture. Cultural comparisons, are known to be an effective tool for engaging students and prompting their reflections on cultural issues, thus promoting their cultural awareness (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Drewelow, 2013; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2003).

In the current study, except for Lu, all the other three instructors applied cultural comparisons in their teaching (Table 7). Cai compared European architecture with Chinese architectures. He also compared individualism in Western cultures and

collectivism in Chinese cultures. Chang compared nostalgia in English literature and Chinese literature. Yang compared American houses with Chinese houses.

Table 7. Cultural content processed through cultural comparisons

Participant	Topics
Cai	1. Ancient European architecture 2. Collectivism and individualism
Lu	NONE
Chang	1. Nostalgia in literature
Yang	1. Typical architecture of the U.S.

Although the topics involving cultural comparisons varied, the ways that the instructors conducted cultural comparisons were similar: first describing the issue in the target culture, then looking at the similar issue in Chinese culture. For example, when Yang taught American houses, she gave a brief introduction to American houses, then compared American houses with Chinese houses. To make the comparison, Yang displayed pictures of four types of traditional Chinese houses: Linong, SiheYangan, Tulou, and Yaodong. She explained the structures and characteristics of these architecture styles one by one. Finally she finished the instruction by saying:

now we know how American houses look like and how they are different from our Chinese houses, and another basic difference is that, that, most of the Americans live in houses, but we, we ordinary Chinese people, we cannot live in houses, right? it's too expensive, right? I like you to think about these differences and think what kind houses that you like to live in, ok, let's take a break, 下课

(let's take a break)!

The other two instructors also followed this model: teaching the issue in the target culture, then comparing it with the same issue in Chinese culture. During this process, the target culture and Chinese culture were compared in order to deepen students' understanding of the issue. Cultural comparisons are an effective culture teaching approach according to the literature (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Drewelow, 2013; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005). Although cultural comparisons seemed to be used by the instructors, this approach was not used in the way encouraged by the literature or research. First, according to the literature, the cultural comparison activities are initiated by the teacher, but are conducted by the students because the aim of these activities is to help the students develop their own understanding of cultural issues (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Drewelow, 2013). In the current study, however, the comparisons were only conducted by the instructors. The students were not involved in the process.

Second, the literature suggests that the teacher should give explicit instructions about skills to conduct effective cultural comparisons, such as analogies and generalizations (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005). When students understand clearly what they are supposed to do, the expected effects of the activity are prone to be achieved. In order to do this, the teacher needs to provide authentic materials and resources, which the students can make use of when looking for materials to conduct the comparisons. In the current study, however, no such explicit instruction or authentic materials were provided since all the comparisons were made by the instructors and unfolded through their presentation of basic cultural facts.

Third, the literature encouraged comparisons of both similarities and differences between the native and target cultures (Drewelow, 2013). In doing so, the students can relate the target culture with their own culture, then develop a general cultural awareness. In the current study, however, only cultural differences were highlighted by the instructors. Cultural similarities were not emphasized. Moreover, no teaching to promote students' abilities to relate those cultural facts to the perspectives.

In summary, I found that although most of the instructors applied cultural comparisons in their culture teaching practice, they resorted to the teacher-centered and culture-as-facts approach when conducting comparisons. No student exploration was involved in the process.

4.2.3 Use of Online Resources

Besides teacher presentations and cultural comparisons, some pictures, audios, videos, or movies were also involved in some of the observed classes. Some of these materials came from the textbooks or curriculum. Some of them were obtained from the internet. In the stimulated recalls, Cai, Lu, and Chang all affirmed that the Internet was another primary source for their cultural content besides the textbooks.

Among the culture-related topics included through the use of online materials (Table 8), the most frequently occurred was architecture, including "Western architecture," "American architecture," "Traditional Chinese architecture," "Gothic churches," "Roman churches," and "European architecture." I asked the instructors why they used a lot online materials when they taught these topics. Cai and Chang said it was because these topics were easily displayed by visual materials. Lu and Yang answered

that these authentic materials were very helpful when the topics were unfamiliar to them.

Like Yang said:

哦，我放那个录像（讲美国的建筑），就是因为我不太了解美国的建筑，

我没有去过美国，一点都没有这方面的知识，我就在网上找，找了个录像，

里面就有那个例子，这样他们（学生）直接一看就明白了...

yes, I used the film clip (to teach American house) because I did not know what the American houses looked like, I never been to the U.S., I have no knowledge about American houses, so I searched on the internet and found that film which had scenes of American houses, therefore, I just displayed the clips to the students and they easily got to know what American houses looked like...

Table 8. Cultural content processed with the use of online resources

Participants	Topics
Cai	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University of Sheffield, 2. Traditional architecture in China 3. Roman churches 4. Ancient European architecture 5. German TV shows 6. British TV show “Talents of British” 7. Ukraine maniacs 8. Religious song “Gaels’ Blessing”
Lu	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Home on the Range</i> 2. The documentary of Zheng Hu’s expeditionary voyages

	3. Gothic churches 4. Western architecture
Chang	1. Western architecture
Yang	1. <i>Home on the Range</i> 2. Typical American architecture 3. An American family in Good luck Charlie

Integrating the answers of the instructors, I would speculate that it was a combination of unfamiliarity to the instructors and the ease with which it is possible to do searches for visual materials that led the instructors to integrate online materials on the topics listed in Table 8. As the literature indicated, the internet provided authentic materials for FL teaching and learning (Altstaedter, 2009; Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Hsu, 2006; Moore, Morales, & Carel, 1998; Wang, 2009). Using materials from the internet is especially helpful for Chinese EFL teachers because for a long period, Chinese EFL education faced a scarcity of authentic materials (Hsu, 2006; Tsou, 2005). The internet can provide abundant authentic materials. It to a great extent scan help solve this problem.

According to the literature, using various online materials also are expected to help shift the classroom from teacher-centered to student-centered when the students conducted inquires on specific cultural topics (Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Hsu, 2006; Wang, 2009). However, these objectives were not reflected in the current study. The online materials were only used to “teach,” not to “learn” the culture. In other words, the online materials were primarily used in teaching activity instead of in learning activities. For

example, when teaching the American song “Home on the Range,” Yang displayed a music video of the song which consisted of beautiful scenery of the American West to the class. When introducing his hometown, Chang displayed pictures of the landscape, food, and dressing of Buyi nationality. When talking about Zheng Hu’s expeditionary voyages, Lu let the students watch a document video about the voyages. When introducing Gothic architecture, Cai used pictures of Milan Cathedral and other two cathedrals to make his explanation of the characteristics of the architecture visual and clear. During all these processes, it was only the instructors who used the materials found on the internet. The students just listened and watched. They were not engaged in the process. Aligned to what Moore, Morales and Carel (1998) found, receptive learning materials were usually preferred by the instructors rather than interactive-media materials. The instructors could encourage and guide the students to do some online activities or inquiry tasks, such as searching information about cultural issues or participating in some online discussions. This will engage the students in culture learning and help them develop deep understanding of the subjects (Moore, Morales & Carel, 1998).

4.2.4 Student presentations and group discussions

Interactive learning was not only rarely observed when the instructors used online resources, but also rarely observed when they taught culture through other approaches. During the study, only three student presentations and one group discussion were conducted.

Two of the student presentations occurred in Chang’s classes. A week before the class, Chang selected three students and assigned them to prepare for presentations on

“My hometown” and “Nostalgia in Chinese poems” respectively. In the last class of a unit entitled “Home,” the students gave the presentations one by one in English. After each presentation, Chang just provided feedback on the student’s performance. No further discussion on the content of the presentation or reflection on the subject were conducted.

The group discussion happened in Yang’s class. When teaching a text about family, Yang grouped the students into pairs and asked them to brainstorm “family value” in both Chinese and English cultures. After about ten minutes of discussion, three pairs of students were selected randomly by Yang to share their discussion content with the whole class. This discussion activity provided students some opportunities to practice their English as well as communicating on cultural issues. However, the instructor did not provide explicit directions for students in doing the discussion, such as the questions on which they were expected to focus.

4.2.5 Summary

The analysis of the methods used by the instructors to teach culture indicated that the traditional language teaching approaches, in particular the teacher presentation was the primary approach that the instructors relied on although other approaches, such as use of cultural comparisons and various online materials were also involved in the classes. Student inquires or interactive learning activities were rarely observed. The following sections will reveal the reasons behind the instructors’ choices of what and how to teach.

4.3 How do the instructors’ perspectives on culture teaching and their pre-existing cultural knowledge inform their curriculum and instructional decisions?

The above sections described and analyzed the instructors' curriculum and instructional decisions regarding culture teaching. Another focus of this study was to investigate why the instructors made these decisions. According to the literature, teachers' pre-existing cultural knowledge, perspectives on culture teaching, perception of the school's attitudes toward culture teaching, and interpretations of policy initiatives all had critical impact on their pedagogical decisions (Byrd et al., 2011; Lazaraton, 2003; Pauchulo, 2005; Sercu, 2002; Zhou, 2011). Therefore, these aspects were primarily focused in the current study. Their impact on the instructors' pedagogical decisions were analyzed.

4.3.1 How do the instructors' attitudes toward culture teaching inform their pedagogical decisions?

The focus of the second phase of data collection was to investigate the instructors' attitudes toward culture teaching. The findings supported the arguments of existing research that FL teachers were generally supportive of culture teaching and believed in its importance for FL education (Lazaraton, 2003; Pauchulo, 2005; Sercu, 2002; Zhou, 2011). In the interviews with the four instructors, all of them seemed to hold positive attitudes toward culture teaching.

Instructor's attitudes toward culture teaching.

In the interview, Chang expressed firm support for culture teaching. He said:

学语言就是要一定讲一些文化知识... 因为学习文化知识促进语言的学习, 另外我们学习语言技能的最终目的还是和人进行交流, 如果没有文化背景等知识, 交流起来一定有障碍... 如果我们这样做(教文化)的话, 可能学习者的学习兴趣会得到提高, 因为我们以前局限在听说读写技能的培训过上,

学生会有点枯燥和厌倦，在教学当中加入文化的内容，有利于提高他们的学习兴趣，另外的话，我觉得有利于学生更加准确深入的去理解这门语言，比如很多语言现象背后有很多文化内涵，如果我们不了解这些文化内涵，就没法真正去掌握这门语言，去用它

learning the language MUST learning the culture... because learning the culture facilitates learning of language, so the final purpose of language learning is to communicate with the people, lacking knowledge of their cultures or backgrounds will impede the communication... if we do this (integrate culture into the classroom), students' interest in the class will be promoted, it is because our teaching focus was develop their four skills, they might feel a little bit boring about that, thus, integrating cultural content into the language teaching, I think, will get them motivated to learn the language as well as the culture, thus, facilitate their mastering of the language, it is because there are many cultural issues behind the language, we cannot master the language or use it without knowing these cultural issues...

In this excerpt, Chang confirmed that culture was an inevitable component of the language classroom. He identified three important functions of teaching and learning culture. First, culture learning facilitated students' language acquisition. Second, culture learning improved students' abilities to use the language in real communicative contexts. Third, integrating culture into language instruction could engage students and inspire their interest in the class. Chang's perspective on culture teaching and learning aligned with many voices of scholars in the field, such as those who described the relationship between language and culture as inseparable (Byram, 1989, 1994; Brown, 2007; Fantini,

1997; Grittner, 1996; Hall, 2002; Kramsch, 1993, 1995; Kramsch, Cain & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996; Moran, 2001; Stern, 1983), those who identify the importance of culture learning for the improvement of students' communicative competence (Hall, 2002; Wintergerst, McVeigh, & Brown, 2014), and those who see culture as a stimulus to motivate or engage the students (Biggs & Watkins, 1995; Furlong & Maynard, 1995).

Lu's support for culture teaching was as staunch as Chang's. She emphasized the importance of culture teaching through analyzing its role in communication:

学这门语言，你得了解人家的民族，它的历史和文化，否则你学它干什么，在你没有很多机会跟外国人直接交流的情况下，学习不同于你的文化会带给你不同的视角，来看待这个世界... 我们学语言终究还是为了用... 如果你不理解语言背后的文化，甚至不能尊重对方的文化，你哪怕语法词汇再好，但是你不能说出人家愿意听到的那种文化背景下所合适的那种话语，那就很难达到交际的目的...

to master a language, you need to know the culture of the people who speak that language, such as the history of the nations, if you don't, why do you study the language? how can you communicate with the people without knowing their culture? learning the target culture brings you different perspectives to understand the world... anyway, we learn a language for the purpose of using it in communication... if you do not know or respect the culture behind that language, no matter how good you are at the grammar and vocabulary, you do not know how to what is appropriate or what is not when communicating with native speakers of the language...

Lu assumed that without knowing its culture, people could not communicate effectively

with native speakers of the target language. This view aligned with the literature (Byram, 1989; Liddicoat & Crozet, 1997; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005) which advocates that culture integration improves students' communicative competence. The view left out, however, relates to the benefits of culture integration for the purpose of facilitating students' language acquisition. According to the literature, culture integration does not only help promote students' cultural knowledge or awareness, but also has the potential to increase students' engagement and thus facilitate their language acquisition opportunities. It was because culture integration brings various authentic resources and communicative opportunities to the class which enliven the classroom environment and motivate the students (Adamowski, 1991; Altstaedter, 2009; Garrett-Rucks, 2013). Lu emphasized the role of culture integration in scaffolding students' culture knowledge, but ignored its role in promoting students' language competence.

Both of Lu and Chang firmly supported culture teaching and regarded it as a dispensable component of language classroom. They even thought that learning the culture was the basis for learning the language. The other two instructors, Cai and Yang, they also claimed that culture teaching was necessary for language classroom, however, the benefits of including culture that they gave were different from those given by Chang or Lu. According to Cai:

这个(教文化)是绝对必要的, 这个是必须的, 这个是绝对必要的, 要想学好语言, 如果不学这个(文化), 必定是学不好的, 你想让学生学好, 一方面得引起他们的兴趣, 加入文化的内容, 可以帮助提高他们学习的兴趣, 一定要讲一些他们感兴趣的, 比方欧洲的奢侈品牌子, 苹果的什么的, 这些学生都喜欢听...所以说, 文化虽然要讲, 但在语言课上也就是一

个配角，就像甜品，是次要的，是一种调剂，调节品，是为了让学生开心让他们乐而已，就是为了有趣... 教文化的东西嘛，我从来都不准备的，有什么可准备的，想到哪就讲到哪啊...

it (culture teaching) is necessary, necessary, you cannot master the language without knowing its culture, you want the student to learn what you teach, you need to interest them, including cultural content helps with that, it is because the students are interested in culture, like the luxury brands of the Europe, Mac products and etc. the students are interest to know these...therefore, we need to teach culture, however, culture is only a minor part in language class, like the disserts to a meal, it is subordinate to language teaching, it is more like a tool to entertain the students, it's just for fun... for this part, I have never done a preparation, it is not necessary, I just speak out what jumps into my mind at the moment...

Cai seemed to show support for culture integration. However, he only articulated one benefit of culture inclusion which was that including culture could enliven the classroom and attract students' attention. This benefit was listed in the literature (Adamowski, 1991; Altstaedter, 2009; Garrett-Rucks, 2013). However, other benefits of culture inclusion, such as its function of reducing students' stereotyping of the target culture, promoting students' cultural experience and awareness, and facilitating students' language acquisition, were ignored by him. For Cai, culture teaching was beneficial, but the benefit was limited.

Yang's attitude toward culture teaching was similar to Cai's. She said:

这个(文化教学)，我没太想过这个东西，反正讲语言，你肯定是要讲文化

的，这两个东西是不能分开的，但(文化)也没有什么特重要的，只觉得是提供一个背景知识，帮助理解，再没有什么了...我讲文化的时候，当然都是提前准备好的啊，就是备课的时候就准备好的

this (the role of culture teaching), I have thought about it, anyway, you cannot avoid cultural issues when teaching a FL, they are inseparable, but (culture teaching) is not particularly important, it just provides background information for learning of the text, nothing else... those cultural content that I taught were all prepared in advance together with the language content...

In Yang's perspective, culture integration was necessary and beneficial. However, the benefit was limited to background information providing. Like Cai, Yang neglected all the other benefits or functions of culture integration.

The above analysis revealed that all instructors thought culture teaching was necessary for the language classrooms and facilitated language teaching and learning in some ways although the specific benefits of culture integration that each instructor articulated were different.

Impact of instructors' attitudes on their practice.

Besides the general agreement on the necessity of culture inclusion, the literature and research also indicated a close relationship between teachers' attitudes culture teaching and their practice (Ryan, 2010; Seelye, 1984; Siskin, 2007). Teachers who were more positive toward culture teaching involved more cultural content in their classes (Byrd et al., 2011; Seru, 2002).

The current study to some extent supported the above argument. Observations of the classrooms indicated that all instructors included culture-related topics in their

classrooms. The one who taught these topics most frequently and broadly was Cai. In his class, a wide range of interesting cultural topics, from British educational systems to Cuban cigars, from Italian architecture to Western Feminism, and from German TV shows to American food, were included. However, these topics were mainly approached through teacher presentations and were included accidentally. Usually he did not have a plan of what cultural content to teach. He just inserted cultural topics arbitrarily into his instruction during the class when he thought of them. For example, when talking about Western families, Cai inserted his knowledge about Western women's beliefs in marriage by saying:

其他西方国家的女人都很独立的，她们可不依赖于男人，比中国女人独立多了-中国女人一过了二十三四还没结婚就急的要死，觉得她们自己嫁不出去了...

women in Western countries are independent of men, they are more independent than Chinese women - they do not rely on men, Chinese women feel desperately anxious when they cannot get married at 23 or 24...

In the later stimulated recall, I asked him why he inserted this topic. He said:

就是讲到那想起来了嘛，觉得挺有意思的顺口就说了...

just because that I suddenly remember it and thought it was interesting...

In the observed classes of Cai, such impromptu and unorganized culture teaching occasionally. Because his teaching was usually unprepared, most of his culture-related topics were presented as facts through his presentations with anecdotal information consisting of stories of his personal knowledge about the issue. When introducing those topics which were prepared, Cai used some materials, such as pictures and video clips

searcher on the internet. However, these materials were used only to facilitate his transformation of the facts. No interactive learning activities or activities involving teaching of cultural perspectives were observed in Cai's classes. This teaching approach led to many problems to Cai teaching, such as misunderstandings and misconceptions of the cultural issues. These problems will be discussed in the final chapter. In summary, Cai's culture teaching practice seemed to mirror his attitudes toward culture teaching: 1) culture was to enliven the classroom, and 2) culture teaching did not need to be prepared in advance. It could be the spur of the moment.

Yang was the one among the four instructors who included the least amount of cultural content. Only three cultural topics were included by her. If you recall, when teaching these three topics, Yang employed abundant online materials, including pictures, videos, and audio files to facilitate her teaching. She also assigned the students to do group discussions on one of the cultural topics. Yang's were the only interactive learning activities occurred in all the observed classes of the four instructors. Like Cai, Yang's practice in the classroom also seemed to reflect her attitudes toward culture teaching. First, she thought that culture was an important but not crucial part of language learning. In the observed classes, she included cultural content, but the quantity of the content was limited to a few instances. Second, she thought culture-related teaching needed to be prepared before the class as well as language teaching. In practice, she said that she spent lot of time searching for useful authentic materials and designing culture-related learning activities.

Lu and Chang involved similar quantities of cultural topics in their classes. They included fewer topics than Cai, but much more than Yang. Their inclusion of culture

activities seemed to be prepared before the class because they used more visual or audio materials found on the internet before the class. Although the most frequently used approach was still teacher presentations. I found that they relied less on this strategy than Cai did with his improvised mention of cultural information. Other approaches, such as use of online resources and student presentations were sometimes included by them. The problems which occurred frequently in Cai's class, such as misunderstanding and stereotypical assumptions of the target culture, did not happen frequently in the observed classes of Chang or Lu. All of these observations seemed to be a reflection of the two instructors' firm support for culture teaching and emphasis on culture as a necessary component of the class.

Compared to the instructors' attitudes toward culture teaching and their practice, it seemed that there was a close relationship between their attitudes and pedagogical decisions. Among Yang, Lu, and Chang, the later two instructors expressed more support for culture teaching and articulated more benefits of culture integration in the interviews. They included more culture-related topics in their classes. Compared to them, Yang did not articulate many benefits of culture teaching. For her, culture integration was only a tool used to provide background information. In the 12 classes I observed, she only included three culture-related topics. This comparison seemed to lead to a conclusion which echoed the findings of existing research that instructors who were positive toward culture teaching were prone to devote more time and efforts to prepare and to teach cultural content (Byrd et al., 2011; Seru, 2002). However, this conclusion does not explain why Cai devalued the role of culture but included many culture-related topics in his classes. An exploration of the impact of instructors' pre-existing cultural

knowledge and attitudes on their teaching may provide some clues to understand Cai's case.

4.3.2 How do the instructors' pre-existing cultural knowledge inform their pedagogical decisions?

According to the literature, teachers' knowledge is a decisive factor for their curriculum design and classroom instruction besides their perspectives on the issue (Wing, 1993). In Shulman's (1987) model of teacher knowledge, content knowledge and pedagogical strategies are embraced by other categories. To make their culture teaching meaningful, FL teachers need to develop both knowledge about cultural issues and teaching strategies to transform the knowledge to their students (Cochran, King, & DeRuiter 1991; Lafayette, 1993). Constructivists also emphasize the role that people's pre-existing knowledge plays in the process that they make sense of the outside world (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Richardson, 1997). Inspired by these theories about teacher knowledge, the current study investigated how the instructors' pre-existing cultural knowledge and pedagogical knowledge informed their pedagogical decisions. Data collected from observations and interviews were incorporated.

Instructors' pre-existing cultural knowledge.

Inspired by some existing research (Hsu, 2006; Kang, 2012; Pauchulo, 2005; Zhou, 2011), I asked the instructors questions regarding their cultural conceptions and general cultural knowledge to explore their pre-existing cultural knowledge. Because of time and space constraints, other ways to explore the issue, such as surveys or tests, were not employed in this study.

The questions mainly included the following ones (Appendix B):

Section 2. Instructors' cultural knowledge and attitudes towards culture teaching

5. What do you think “culture” is? Could you give examples?
6. What do you think “English culture” is? Could you also give examples?
7. How did you learn about teaching culture?
8. How important do you think culture is in EFL classes?
9. What kind of culture(s) do you think that teachers should teach?
10. How much cultural content do you think should be integrated into the class compared with language instruction?
11. In what way these cultural content should be taught?

The cultural conception provided by Cai focused on the products of the culture, in particular the food and literacy. He said,

(文化) 是一个宽泛的概念，因为这个东西没有办法去那么具体，因为生活里的东西，即使是吃饭都属于文化，饮食文化，比方西北人爱吃粉条，爱吃酸辣的... 在咱们大学英语课程里，我们一般讲的就是我们自己比较擅长的那部分文化，比如我是学英美文学的，我就讲文学方面的文化比较多，有些人出过国，对于欧美的生活比较了解，他就多讲讲见闻...

(culture) is a broad conception, it is hard to specify it because everything of the life is culture, like the food, for example, people living in the Northwest like prefer noodles and sour and spicy food, this is culture... in our College English classroom, we prefer to teach the part of culture which we are more familiar with, for example, I study focus is British and American literature, therefore I prefer to teach culture in this field, some other instructors lived in other

countries, they may include those experience..

Cai advocated that culture was a broad conception, possible including everything of our daily life, such as the food. This definition was close to the concept of small c culture. However, as he indicated, Cai could only include topics more related to the Big C, in particular literature because he was more familiar with literature. This revealed that Cai's choices about what cultural content to teach in the class were to some extent decided by his personal cultural knowledge and familiarity with the content. This aligned with what Moraine (1997) found. The products of culture were relatively tangible and prone to be introduced by the teachers.

Compared with what I found from the classroom observations, Cai's conception of culture seemed to be reflected in his practice. Among the 44 cultural topics included by him, 42 were coded as cultural products. Only two were cultural perspectives. They were the topics of collectivism vs. individualism and western women's beliefs about marriage. The frequent inclusion of cultural products, especially products of literacy and arts (e.g., Phantom of the Opera, Denmark fairy tales, theories of Sigmund Freud), reflected that Cai thought that the famous works of literature and arts should be the primary cultural content to include.

Like Cai, Chang also defined culture in a broad way:

文化，就是人类的一种生活方式，她们怎么生活的，吃什么，穿什么，她们对(世界)友谊爱情家庭都是怎么看的，以及他们创造出的一系列物质的东西，比如文学，我觉得，这些都属于文化...

culture, is the way of people's lives, the way they eat and wear, the way they perceive (the world), friendship, love, and family, these and all that they produce,

such as the literature, is culture...

Chang seemed to articulate a clearer and more comprehensive cultural conception compared with Cai. This conception included all aspects of human life: the way people live, the way they view the world, and the products of their society. Chang's concept covered both the "small c" and "Big C" culture. All the three cultural dimensions described in the *Standards* (2006) were also all included. This was noteworthy in that this definition seemed to align with professional knowledge in the field about what defines culture.

Incorporating the findings of the classroom observation, Chang's cultural conception seemed to be reflected in his practice. In the observed 12 classes of Chang, eight culture-related topics (Table 9) were identified. These topics covered all the three dimensions of culture. However, the majority topics were related to cultural products and the three dimensions were usually introduced separately. This partly echoed the existing research which found that the teacher's conception of culture conceptions had an impact on what they taught in the classroom (Pauchulo, 2005).

Table 9. Topics included by Chang

Products	1. Western architecture 2. Western family structures 3. Nostalgia in literature 4. Chinese poems 5. My hometown
Practice	1. Violence on campus in Western countries
Perspectives	1. Westerners' family values

	2. The relationship between Western family members
--	--

Lu provided two cultural conceptions, a broad one and a narrow one. According to her,

广义上来说,“文化”就是一个集体再现的精神体系,它会规范我们的行为,思想和其它的;但是我觉得这个所谓的文化,尤其是在‘大学英语’教学里,我觉得就是,你学这门语言,你首先得了解讲这门语言的人的一些想法和特质,特别是一些民族传统什么的,然后才能去学其它的文学什么的,因为这些都会影响到他们语言的运用<这个文化还是特别难定义

broadly speaking, “culture” is a psychological system shared by the members of a society, it shapes our communication, thinking, and all the other of our behaviors; however, in the College English class, I feel that culture mainly includes traditions of the society, shared characteristics of people living in the society, and their perspectives, only after knowing these, you can understand other aspects of culture, such as the literature, it is because these are the aspects which directly have impact on people’s use of the language <anyway, it is hard to define culture...

The “broad” cultural conception provided by Lu focused on the psychological aspects of culture. The narrowed one defined culture from the perspective of its relationship with language. In this conception, culture was a “shared” system composed of ethics, customs, and perspectives of a society. According to Lu, this system framed people’s behaviors, thinking, and use of language. Different from Cai and Chang, Lu prominently emphasized cultural perspectives. In her perspective, cultural products and practices

were derivatives of cultural perspectives. Incorporating the classroom observations, I found that Lu's emphasis on the perspectives was not fully reflected in her teaching.

Table 10. Topics included by Lu

Products	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An American song 2. Traditions about Christmas Gothic churches 3. Greek fairy tales 4. Typical architectures in several countries
Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Westerners' hobbies of DIY furniture
Perspectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A perspective to look at historical events

Among the six culture-related topics identified in Lu's classes, the majority were coded as cultural products. Only one was coded as cultural perspective. However, as described in previous sections, the time spent on historical events was much more than time spent on any other cultural topic. By including historical events, Lu tried to let the students understand that history was dynamic. People needed to look at historical issues from a dynamic perspective. She explained that this perspective was the basis for interpreting any historical or social issue. In doing so, she seemed to relate cultural products with perspectives. Although Lu did not involve much content about cultural perspective in terms of quantity, it was impressing that how she emphasized the importance of learning people's perspectives for understanding their culture.

Compared to the conceptions of the other instructors, Yang's cultural conception was really narrow and only included a part of the small c. In her perspective, culture was equivalent to literature and arts:

文化，嗯，文化就是主要包括一些什么那个，文学呀，嗯，艺术呀什么的，主要就是那个，其他的，嗯，没有什么了...

culture, um, um, culture is, mainly includes those, um, literature, arts, is mainly composed of these, others, um, just these...

Yang's cultural conception was close to those prevailing in the early stage of the 20th century when culture was only a part of literature courses (Pound, 1934; Sapir, 1949). A more noteworthy issue was how she gave the definition. Yang looked very hesitant when asked to give a definition. I was not sure why she hesitated. A possibility was that she did not know how to define culture or that she realized the complexity of the question. Another possibility was that she never seriously thought about what culture was. Therefore, it took her a long period time to organize her ideas on the issue.

Although Yang did not provide a definition which was close to the definitions offered by scholars in the field, it was hard to conclude that she did not have knowledge about culture. Asking the instructors to define culture was only one approach to explore their cultural conceptions. Other ways could be surveys, questionnaire, and tests. Because of the time and space constraints, these approaches were not applied in the current study.

In her observed classes, only three culture-related topics were identified, including an American song, a TV soap opera, and the typical American architecture. All these three topics could be grouped to the category of "art" according to Yang's cultural conception. When these products were introduced, no related perspectives were included. Incorporated with her cultural conception, it seemed that Yang's decisions on what culture to include seemed to be greatly informed by her narrowed definition of culture.

Comparing the cases of the four instructors, I found that the instructors' pedagogical decisions regarding what cultural content to include in the classrooms to a great extent aligned with how they articulated their conceptions of culture. It seemed that those who emphasized the product dimension included much content related to this dimension in their classes. Those who emphasized cultural perspectives spent more time introducing related topics. For sure, this is not to say that instructors' conceptions were the only explanations about their culture teaching choices.

Besides asking the instructors to describe their conceptions about culture, I also asked them to reflect on their pre-existing culture knowledge. Among the four instructors, Cai was the only one who was very confident in his personal cultural knowledge and revealed links to pre-existing culture knowledge. He told me in the interview that his cultural knowledge was "very very sufficient" (我的文化知识还是非常丰富的). This gave him "enough support when teaching culture in the class" (所以我上课常常讲文化的东西). He attributed his abundant culture knowledge to his family background. He told me that both of his parents were artists. They always encouraged him to learn different cultures.

In contrast, no any other instructor expressed same confidence on the issue as Cai did. Some of them even directly admitted that their cultural knowledge was limited. Like Yang, she told me that she had to avoid touching on some topics in the class because the culture issues related to these topics were not familiar to her. Lu was also aware of her limitation in cultural knowledge. Both Chang and Lu expressed a desire to learn more cultural knowledge. Lu said:

咱们教师本身的文化修养有限，不是所有和文化相关的问题都懂，所以只

能根据自身的水平来讲，当然这个是可以提高的，我们需要不断的去学习，比如多读一点文化方面的书籍...

our cultural knowledge is very limited, there are many cultural issues that we do not study, it limits our culture teaching, but of course, this situation can be changed, the way to change it, for example, we teachers need to keep learning and reading more culture-related books...

In the practice, the analysis of the classroom observations indicated that these three instructors included much less cultural content in terms of both quantity and frequency compared to Cai, who was confident with his personal cultural knowledge. Incorporating these observations with the instructors' pre-existing cultural knowledge, the current study supported the argument that the teacher's pre-existing cultural knowledge was a important factor for the quantity of cultural content that he/she included in the class (Gay & Howard, 2000; Pauchulo, 2005; Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). It seemed that the more cultural knowledge the instructor had, the more culture-related content he/she taught.

Pedagogical knowledge.

According to the literature, teachers not only need to have knowledge about the subjects, but they also need to know how to transform the content knowledge into instruction for the students (Cochran et al., 1991; Lafayette, 1993; Shulman, 1987). Therefore, I explored the instructors' pedagogical knowledge about how to make effective culture teaching.

In the interviews with the instructors, I put forward the following questions regarding their knowledge about teaching strategies:

- 你学习过怎样融入文化吗，或者是接受过这方面的培训吗？

Have you ever learned to teach cultural issues or received training on it?

- 如果有，能不能描述一下，并且告诉我你觉得这些学习或者培训对你融入文化有什么样的帮助？

If you have, could you describe it and tell me how much helpful it is for your teaching?

- 如果没有，那么你在课堂里融入文化的方法是从哪里和何时学到的？

If you have not, where and how did you obtain the strategies that you use when teaching cultural issues?

All instructors told me that they had never received formal training about how to teach culture. As for the resources from where they obtained the strategies that they used, their answers were also similar. Chang said:

方法？这个方面我真没有研究过，不太懂，你知道的，我是搞翻译的，教学法我真的不懂...

I have never studied it (culture teaching strategies), I do not have much knowledge about it, as you know, my study focus is translation, I know nothing about pedagogy for culture teaching...

Chang said that he knew nothing about culture teaching pedagogy. It was not true. He used some authentic materials and student presentations in the classes when introducing some cultural topics. It seemed that he had some sort of knowledge about culture teaching, but he did not realize it.

Cai's answer was direct. He said:

我需要什么特别的方法吗？不需要啊，直接讲就行了啊...

do I need to know the pedagogy to teach culture? no, I just talk about it (the culture) directly...

Lu's answer provided some clues for analysis of the issue. She said:

嗯，我也没有什么具体的方法，嗯，就是照着我的老师的方法教，怎么教语言的部分，也就怎么教文化吧...

um, I don't have specific strategies, um, I just follow the ways that I was taught in college, I teach culture in the same way that I teach the language...

Lu's answers indicated two sources from where she acquired her teaching strategies.

One source was what she learned from observations of her professors' teaching while a student in colleges. Another was the strategies that she had learned and used to teach language. She said that she usually taught culture in a similar way in which she taught the language. According to the research on teacher education in China, this is a common problem with Chinese EFL teaching (Hu, 2002a; Jin, 2008). The teachers followed the way that they were taught or borrowed the strategies that they used to teach the linguistic content.

Yang said,

这个还真没想过，不太清楚，好像也没有什么具体的方法吧，就是，现在不是提倡communicative teaching嘛，我就尽可能用一些吧...

what strategies do I use? um, I have never thought about it, I am not sure, it seems that I do not use any specific strategies, but, the communicative teaching is encouraged now, so I try to use it in my culture teaching...

Like Chang, Yang also graduated from a teachers college at a university in the town, but she said she did not know specific strategies to teach culture either. The source for her

culture teaching strategy was same to the second source of Lu's. Both of them used the strategies to teach the language.

Although all instructors denied that they had ever received formal training about strategies for teaching the culture in the interviews, it could be because they just forgot what they had learned from their degree programs since they had graduated many years ago. If what they reported was true, the teachers seemed to lack opportunities to fully develop their cultural knowledge and culture teaching strategies while students in colleges. This problem is not isolated to the Chinese EFL context, but also exists in programs in Western countries. According to research (Schulz, 2007; Watzke, 2003; Wilbur, 2007), many FL teachers lack cultural knowledge and strategies to explore cultural issues in ways that have the potential to transform student learning.

The instructors' practice seemed to reflect their report of lack culture teaching pedagogy. If you can recall, the primary teaching approach used by the instructors was teacher presentations through which, basic cultural facts were introduced with anecdotal information consisting of stories of the instructors' personal knowledge of the target culture as an outsider. The approaches commonly suggested by scholars, such as using cultural comparisons and authentic resources were much less frequently used. The cultural perspectives behind these facts were also seldom included. According to the literature, however, an effective culture teaching activity is expected to promote students' cultural awareness as well as cultural experience (Byram, 1989; Byram & Risager, 1999; Guilherme, 2002; Bennett, 1998; Kramsch, 1993; Paige et al., 2003). The students needed opportunities to develop their own understanding of cultural issues or to interpret the issues from different cultural perspectives, through carefully planned lessons, with

images, videos, and documents to explore themselves.

To solve the potential problem of lacking training about culture teaching, many scholars blamed or expected teacher education programs to provide prospective teachers with social and historical insights and to encourage them to develop strategies for teaching the culture, such as connecting language and culture, relating cultural practices and products to perspectives, asking good questions, encouraging student inquiries, solving problems, and assessing students' learning (Byram, 1994; Byram, et al., 2002; Byrd, et al., 2011; Kramsch, 1993; Schulz, 2007; Wing, 1993). One might argue that there could also be in-service, ongoing professional development in this area, offered by language departments in China, or, as professor Jia suggested in his interview, the instructors themselves could develop their teaching strategies through reflecting on their learning experience or pursuing their own independent learning.

4.3.3 Summary

An incorporation of the observation and interview data revealed that the instructors' attitudes toward culture teaching, their pre-existing cultural knowledge, and their culture teaching pedagogical knowledge to some extent informed their curriculum and instructional decisions regarding culture teaching. I found that the instructors generally supported integrating culture into EFL teaching. Those who were more positive toward culture teaching, or those who had more abundant cultural knowledge seemed to include more cultural content in their classes in terms of quantity and frequency. These instructors also seemed to be more willing to devote time and efforts in preparing and designing culture teaching activities.

4.4 How does the EFL reform in China impact the four instructors' pedagogical

decisions about culture teaching?

When looking for explanations about why educators do what they do in classrooms, it is important not to ignore the broader policy context in which they work. For this reason, I also explored the impact of the reform initiative on the instructors' pedagogical decisions. According to constructivism, knowing is an “adaptive” process (Steff & Gale, 1995) and knowledge is “subjectively” constructed and reflected in the practice (Glasersfeld, 1995). An outside force can only act on one's behavior when it is comprehended and constructed through interacting with one's pre-existing knowledge and experience (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Hjern, 1982). Therefore, as an outside factor, the impact of the Reform was mainly investigated through the analysis of the instructors' interpretation of the Reform and their perception of the School's attitudes toward the Reform.

4.4.1 The New Cultural Component of the Reform

Chapter 1 discussed how the College English Teaching Reform was initiated by the Chinese government to import communicative language teaching approaches to China in order to improve students' competence in using the language to communicate with people from other countries. Besides linguistic competence, students' cultural competence was also a crucial component of their communicative competence, explicitly prescribed in the *College English Curriculum Requirements* (Ministry of Education, 2007):

College English is not only a language course that provides basic knowledge about English, but also a capacity enhancement course that helps students to broaden their horizons and learn about different cultures in the world. It not only

*serves as an instrument, but also has humanistic values. When designing College English courses, therefore, it is necessary to take into full consideration the development of students' cultural capacity and the teaching of knowledge about different cultures in the world... The objective of College English is to develop students' ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, **and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness** (p. 2)*

In this official document, students' cultural competence, which is composed of cultural knowledge and awareness, was regarded a crucial component of their communicative competence. Developing students' cultural competence (capacity) was established as one of the three teaching objectives of College English courses. To achieve this objective, EFL teachers were encouraged to include more cultural content when designing the class:

When designing College English courses, therefore, it is necessary to take into full consideration the development of students' cultural capacity and the teaching of knowledge about different cultures in the world (p. 6).

Although the Requirements did not provide specific guidelines regarding how to include cultural content into the EFL curriculum and instruction or how to promote students' cultural competence, it was the first time that culture inclusion was encouraged and promoted by the government. To probe the establishment of this new status of culture teaching, I interviewed Professor Jia, leader of the group who designed the

policies of Reform and formulated the content of the *Requirements*. The two-hour interview with him provided much information, such as their consideration for including a new cultural component in the Reform. First, Jia confirmed the importance of culture in EFL education:

文化融入是不可避免的，文化总是和语言结合一起的，尤其是当你要能够 *effective communication* 的话呢，一定要有 *cultural awareness* 和 *cultural knowledge*，对吧？咱们最简单的比方，说白了还是你要会说话嘛，你不知道人家对方的文化，有时候讲的话不得体，那么你交流就发生故障和困难了，那何况你中外交际，文化传统不一样，那其中可能的隔阂就更多了，所以呢这（教改的文件）里面就强调了这个文化...

(because) culture teaching is inevitable, culture is intertwined with language teaching, especially when you want to conduct effective communication (with people from other countries), you must have cultural awareness and knowledge, right? for example, when you are not aware of the culture of your interlocutor, you are more likely to behave inappropriately, therefore, misunderstandings are more likely to occur...this is why culture teaching is emphasized here (in the Requirements)...

According to Jia, culture was an inevitable component of language education. Understanding their culture was a prerequisite for conducting “effective communication” with speakers of the target language. Therefore, EFL teaching needed to pay more attention to developing students’ “culture knowledge” and “culture awareness.”

In the interview, Jia also clarified the purpose of including a new cultural component in the Reform. He said,

基于(教改)就是为了引入交际性教学的理念，来提高我们的教学效果和学生的英语应用能力...我们觉得文化融入就是一种好方法，来实现这一目标...它能够提高学生的文化知识和文化交流能力，减少交流中的误解...

since (the Reform) is to export communicative teaching and improve the teaching effects and students' abilities to use the language in real communication...we think that culture teaching is a good way to realize the objective...it improves students' cultural knowledge and competence, and reduces miscommunication...

In his clarification, culture teaching was regarded as an effective approach to promote students' cultural competence and communicative competence, which was the main objective of the Reform.

Jia's interpretation was highly consistent with the content of the document. As the leader of the Advisory Board, who directly answers to the Ministry of the Education and is in charge of the composition of all the policies regarding the Reform, his interpretation very likely represented the perspective of the government. He thought that the importance of culture inclusion had been realized by the government. From the interview with Jia, I found that the influence of the discussions on culture teaching was not limited to the profession any more. It had been spread to the stage of policy-making.

4.4.2 Instructors' interpretation of the Reform

Compared to Professor Jia's interpretation, the interpretation of the instructors did not reflect the reform initiatives. According to the instructors, the Reform was just an effort to enhance language teaching. Chang described the objective of College English as follows:

不管怎么改，大学英语始终是一门语言课，主要目标还是提高学生的听说

读写能力...这个文件里的“提高学生们的综合文化素养,”这是什么意思呢? 听到过这个术语,但是要解释起来,还想还真是说不清楚,没有留意过这些...

no matter what reforms are conducted, College English is always a language course, its main objective is to improve the four language skills of the students... “improving students’ cultural capacity and awareness,” what does the culture capacity mean? I heard about this conception, but never paid attention to it, I don’t understand it...

In Chang’s perspective, the objective of EFL courses was always to promote students’ language skills no matter what reforms were implemented. As for the new cultural component of the Reform, Chang could not explain what the “cultural capacity and awareness” mean.

Yang misunderstood the goal of the Reform:

教改, 教改不就是加强语言教学嘛, 就是要提高学生的语言水平和考试成绩吧, 文化教学, (教改里)没有吧...

the Reform is to enhance the teaching of language, and to improve students’ language proficiency and grades in the tests, culture teaching, I don’t think it is emphasized (by the Reform)...

In her perspective, the Reform was to improve language teaching and learning of the language. She hardly remembered there was a cultural component in the Reform.

Chang and Yang both paid attention to the language aspect of the Reform. It seemed that new cultural component did not attract their attention. Cai also emphasized language aspect. He said:

(新教改)不是让你教(文化)这些东西, 教改...是为了加强语言啊... 不要讲什么文化, 让我们多讲基础的英语语言知识和技巧啊! ...

the Reform does not want you to teach these (cultural) things...it is a reform aiming at enhancing language teaching!...NO culture teaching, it asks for more teaching of the basic English language knowledge and skills!...

In his interpretation, culture teaching was not only ignored, but also being totally excluded from College English teaching.

Compared with findings of the analysis of the *Requirements* and the interview with Professor Jia, it seems that these three instructors' interpretations of reform initiatives were all divergent, even opposite to what is stated in the Reform. Compared to them, Lu's understanding of the Reform sounded closer to the reform initiatives. She said:

可能（教改的）基本方向就是要提高学生的交际能了，增加学生的参与，因为以前一直都是老师讲授为主嘛，学生训练的时间很少，这是大方向...因为随着国家与国家之间的交流越来越多，教改就要求我们要多让学生去了解一些不同的文化，然后他们才能更好的掌握语言来和别人进行交流...

the objective (of the Reform) was to improve students' communicative competence and improve their involvement in the class, the class was teacher-centered before, students' involvement was very limited, it is the direction of the Reform....since there is more and more communication with other nations, the Reform required us to teach more cultural content, so that the students will know more about other cultures, this will help them to use the language more appropriately when communicate with people from other countries...

Lu was the only one among the four that articulated the cultural component of the Reform. She realized that culture teaching was encouraged by the Reform as a tool to promote communicative teaching. She even provided an analysis about why culture teaching was encouraged. Her understanding of the reform initiatives and its new cultural component, however, was still not complete. For example, she had a general idea about the fact that culture was included in the Reform, but she could not provide more clarifications about the details.

The analysis of the instructors' interpretation of the reform initiatives revealed that some of them had noticed the new cultural component; however, they more or less misunderstood the initiatives of the Reform. For example, most of the instructors thought the main objective of the Reform was to enforce language teaching rather than communicative teaching. The interviews with these instructors revealed the main cause for these misunderstandings. It was the instructors' unfamiliarity with the new policies. It was indicated that, except for Lu, all the other instructors' knowledge about the Reform and the *Requirements* was limited. Their explanation for this unfamiliarity was similar: before I gave them the copies of the *Requirements*, they had never got an opportunity to read the original document. The only approach for them to know the new policies had been the oral introductions of the Dean of the School and Chair of the Department at the regular school or department meetings. Although the new policies had been mentioned several times at the meetings, no any details or excerpts of the documents were provided. Therefore, they were not very familiar with the reform initiatives.

After hearing instructors' complaints about limited access to the new policies and

the *Requirements*, I printed out where to find the documents and gave each of them a copy at least a week prior to the second interview with them. I asked them to read through the document before the interviews. However, all the instructors, except for Lu, seemed to just skim the document and did not spend much time studying the content. Only Lu reported spending two days reading through the document as well as reflecting on some specific excerpts regarding culture teaching. The result was that in the following interviews, only Lu articulated the cultural component in the document. She was also the only one who provided a relatively accurate interpretation of the objectives of the Reform. Their (ongoing) unfamiliarity with the actual documents explaining the new policies could to some extent explain for their limited knowledge about the Reform. To explore the potential factors for the instructors' ignorance of the new policies, I conducted a follow-up interview with each of them. From these interviews, I found that the School's instruction and transformational leadership had a critical impact on the instructors' understanding and attitudes toward the Reform. This is to be discussed in the follow section.

4.4.3 Instructors' perception of the School's attitudes toward the Reform and culture teaching

According to the literature, leadership is very important in terms of promoting teaching and learning in the local educational context (Blase & Blase, 2000; Hallinger, 1992). The research has consistently linked school leadership to teachers' commitment, involvement, and innovation (Blase & Blase, 2000; Sheppard, 1996). In the recent decades, two complementary dimensions of school leadership have prevailed in education policy field – the instructional leadership and transformational leadership

(Hallinger, 2003).

Instructional leadership, which was developed during the effective school movement of the 1980s, expects the principals to be the primary source of educational expertise (Marks & Printy, 2003). In this approach, the role of the principle is to maintain high expectations for the quality of teaching and learning, direct teachers in designing the curriculum and instruction, supervise their professional development, and monitor student progress (Blase & Blase, 1998).

Transformational leadership was espoused by scholars to enforce the reforms central to school construction (Marks & Printy, 2003). It focuses on the principle's reform role, particular in policy analysis, performance evaluation, problem identification and solving, and communication with stakeholders (Hallinger, 1992). To enhance the overall performance of the school, the two approaches of school leadership are complementary and often intertwined in practice (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998; Marks & Printy, 2003).

In the current study, the School's leadership was investigated through the perspectives of the instructors. In the follow-up interviews with the instructors, I put forward questions about their perception about the School head's attitudes toward culture teaching and the Reform. According to the answers that I received, the instructors did not feel that culture teaching was encouraged by the School.

Cai told me directly that culture teaching had never been emphasized as language teaching was:

加强语言教学（院里的领导）还提提，这关于文化的，没有任何人跟我们提过，天天在和我们强调加强语言，但文化牙根没有人提...

they (the school heads) told us to enforce language teaching, as for the culture teaching, no one has mentioned it, they only put emphasis on language teaching, never emphasize culture teaching...

According to Cai, the head of the School never mentioned culture teaching. Only language teaching was emphasized.

Chang echoed what Cai said:

他们没有提过教改鼓励文化教学，估计院长自己都搞不懂，什么cultural capacity...从来就没有人提，要不是你说我根本就没注意到...学院的口径，就是加强听说，不重视文化...

they (the department heads) did not mention the cultural component of the Reform, I guess that Dean does not understand it either, what the cultural capacity is... it (culture teaching) has never been discussed, I wouldn't notice it if you had not mentioned it... the School only pushes us to enhance the teaching of speaking and listening, they did not pay attention to culture teaching...

Similar to what Cai felt, Chang did not feel any encouragement from the School regarding culture teaching. He even was not sure that the heads of the School were familiar with ways of integrating culture learning with language learning.

Lu expressed a similar view on the issue:

他们（院里领导）讲教改的时候都没有提过文化的事，没有跟我们说让我们融入文化的部分...我觉得如果上头（政府和教育部）要求他们去做的话，他们也不得不做...

when they (the School heads) talked about the Reform, they did not mention its cultural component, they never encouraged us to teach culture... I guess they

will when the top (the government and Ministry of Education strongly demand them to transmit the new policies...

Similar what the other instructors said, Lu told me that the heads of the School did not cover topics regarding culture teaching or the cultural component of the Reform when introducing the new policies of the Reform. It could also be possible that the heads of the School mentioned those issues on the meeting, however, these instructors just forgot.

Yang was very careful when recalling her perception on the School heads' attitudes. She also felt that culture teaching was ignored by the School:

嗯，应该提过吧，我记不清了<你知道院里的工作量挺大的，估计他们也顾不上，也是可以理解的...

um, they (the School heads) probably mentioned it (culture teaching) to us, I cannot remember clearly <you know, they have too much work to do, it is reasonable that they do not have time to work on this in particular...

Besides answering my question, Yang also tried to explain why the School did not pay attention to culture teaching. It was interesting that she always behaved very carefully, even hesitant to comment on the School's policies. I guessed it was related to her age and position. She had a higher position among the instructors, which might bring her more concern about potential negative consequences that her comment on the School could bring in. Therefore, I did not try to push her when she avoided some of my questions.

According to the instructors' perception reported in the interviews, it seemed that the Dean of the School and the Chair of the Department did not pay much attention to culture teaching or attach importance to the cultural component of the Reform. In the

instructors' answers to the questions regarding their perception about the implementation of the new policies, I found that there did not seem to be many changes occurring as a consequence of the Reform. Chang said:

[唉] 我听说有的老师加强了口语的练习, 让学生多说, 就这个而已, 很多老师还是延续了老的教学路子...

[signing] as for the change, I only heard that some instructors reinforced their teaching of speaking, they asked their students to do more practice on it, this is the only change that I know, most of my colleagues just keep the way that they used to...

According to Chang, no change occurred other than an emphasis on drills on speaking in classrooms of the School. He felt that most of the instructors did not change the way that they had taught.

Like Chang, the other three instructors did not see many changes either. The only change that they noticed was in the textbooks. According to Lu and Yang, the newly assigned textbooks included more cultural content compared with the previous ones. Each unit of the texts included an extra section focusing on cultural topics. These cultural topics were developed from the content of the text. Both Yang and Lu noticed this change, but they were not sure if it was a result of the Reform. They just guessed it was.

To obtain an additional perspective about the School's attitudes toward culture teaching and the Reform, I interviewed Professor Hu, Dean of the School. Different from what the instructors said, Hu expressed a support for culture teaching in EFL education in China. He said,

现在随着中国改革开放，越来越接触到西方的文化和价值观了，要了解西方，学习他们的语言，当然也要了解他们的文化...

with the development of the reforms in China, we have more access to the cultures and values of the West, in order to know the western world and learn their languages, of course we need to know their cultures...

In this discourse, Professor Hu confirmed the role of culture teaching and learning considering China's frequent involvement in communication with people from other countries. However, when the interview went deep, his real attitudes toward culture teaching emerged. When asked to describe the functions of culture teaching in the classroom, Hu said,

(teaching culture) aims to amuse the students, because language teaching can be boring, culture inclusion can make the class more interesting...

讲（文化）主要是为了提起学生的兴趣吧，因为仅仅讲语言会有点枯燥，穿插一点文化，可以让课堂有意思一点...

Although he supported culture teaching, Hu underestimated the role of culture in EFL classroom. For him, teaching the culture was only to entertain the students and to enliven the classroom. This view on culture teaching was totally consistent with Cai's. The interview also revealed that Hu's knowledge about the new cultural component of the Reform was limited. Some misunderstanding of the Reform even emerged in his narrations. According to Professor Hu, enhancing the language teaching was the only objective of Reform:

教改，就是为了提高咱们的语言教学嘛，提高学生的英语水平，再没有别的...

the Reform, it was initiated to enhance the language teaching and to improve students' English proficiency, just it...

It was noteworthy that this interpretation of the Reform objectives was also consistent with the instructors'.

When I asked Hu if he noticed the cultural component of the Reform, he thought for a couple of minutes and told me frankly that he did not. He explained that he only paid attention to the requirements for language teaching and assessment. This emphasis on language and ignorance of culture was what the instructors perceived.

Similar to the findings of instructor interviews, the interview with Hu also revealed that that culture teaching did not receive much attention from the School heads. According to the literature, it was because for a long period, language has been the primary focus of FL education in China (Hu, 2002a; Wang & Coleman, 2009). For this reason, even when established as one of the subjects of EFL education by the Reform, culture still was not endowed the same status that the linguistic perspective had. It was possible that because of their ambivalent attitudes toward culture teaching, the School heads automatically filtered out the content related to culture during the process of digesting and interpreting the reform initiatives. Then, the instructors received from the School heads a “filtered” Reform rather than the original one. Therefore, the Reform, in particular its new cultural component, was not transmitted appropriately to the instructors.

This incomplete transmission of the reform initiatives was in part the reflection of the leadership of the School. According to the literature, effective school leadership plays an important role in introducing innovation and shaping the culture and policies of

the school (Leithwood, 1994). Based on the analysis of the instructors' perception, the role of the School's leadership was not fully performed. Actions, such as analyzing the policies, observing classroom teaching, talking to teachers, and solving problems with educators are recommended by the literature (Blase & Blase, 2000; Hallinger, 1992; Southworth, 2002) as strategies to enhance school leadership. In my data, there was no evidence that these strategies were used by the School.

Incorporating these findings with the classroom observations, the insufficient played school leadership seemed to have effects on the instructors' attitudes toward culture teaching and the Reform as well as their curriculum and instructional decisions. The effects were manifested in four aspects. First, two of the instructors devalued the role of culture and defined culture as a tool to provide background information or to enliven the atmosphere of the class. Their attitudes toward culture were totally consistent with Professor Hu's. Second, all the instructors, except for Lu, misunderstood the objectives of the Reform and thought the Reform was initiated to enhance language teaching as well as improve students' language proficiency. This interpretation and misunderstanding of the reform initiatives was also consistent with Professor Hu's. Third, all instructors included cultural content in their classrooms. However, most of their cultural content came from the textbooks or the standardized curriculum. These content was included mainly to facilitate the language teaching, not to promote students' culture experience or awareness. Finally, no instructors knew how to make their culture teaching more effective. Because of lacking both cultural knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, they had to rely on the traditional teaching approaches, in particularly teacher presentations when teaching the culture. Therefore, the teacher-centered

transmission-oriented instruction and “culture as facts” was the typical approach that the instructors used to include their cultural content.

From the above analysis, I found that the new policies did not have much direct impact on instructors’ pedagogical decisions regarding culture teaching. This was the result of an unsuccessful transition of the reform initiatives and an insufficiently played school leadership. According to the literature (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002; Palmer & Rangel, 2011), the reform initiatives had to be transported from the policy-makers to the local instructors via the bridge of the School. During the transition, the instructors constructed their pedagogical decisions through interpretations of the reform initiatives, which were greatly framed by their perceptions of the School’s attitudes toward the Reform and culture teaching. In the current study, because of the School’s misinterpretation of the reform initiatives, the desired effects of the Reform was not achieved. The instructors did not adjust their teaching based on the new policies. A gap between policy-makers’ expectations for the implementation of the new policies and instructors’ practice emerged.

4.5 Summary of the Findings

The analysis of classroom observations, stimulated recalls, and semi-structured interviews provided several important findings about the instructors’ culture teaching practice as well as the factors for their pedagogical decisions.

First, cultural content, or topics with the potential to be cultural content, was generally included in the instructors’ classrooms. The content included was composed of a broad range of topics. Different from the previous research (Lazaraton, 2003; Sercu, 2002; Siskin, 2007), the current study found that the instructors did not confine their

teaching to a specific culture(s) or culture variant(s). The culture(s) of Italy, Greece, Rome, Germany, Denmark, Cuba, France, Russia, Korea, Japan, India, China, northern China, and southern China, were all included by the instructors although the instructors had different preferences in the variants of culture to include. For example, Cai preferred to teach Western cultures and Chang preferred both Chinese and foreign cultures.

The analysis was mainly about quantity and diversity of the cultural topics that the instructors included in the class. However, along with the unfolding of the analysis, I found that the depth of the instructors' teaching of the content was what matters the most. It was because in many cases, the cultural-related topics were just mentioned by the instructors rather than being explored deeply. In other words, these "culture teaching activities" were not real culture teaching that the instructors were expected to conduct by the literature or research. This insufficient exploration of the cultural topics was mainly embodied by the way that they were introduced in the class.

In the classrooms, the culture-related topics were mainly introduced as "facts" rather than facts related to "perspectives." In other words, introduction of observable cultural phenomena and facts dominated the observed classes. Discussions on people's perspectives were seldom included. Similar to existing research (Byram et al. 1991; Kurogi, 1998), these "facts" were often presented with anecdotal information consisting of stories of the instructors' personal impression of the target culture as an outsider. When teaching these culture-related topics, the instructors primarily relied on teacher presentations. Other teaching approaches, such as the use of cultural comparisons and audio or video online resources, were also involved in culture teaching activities. They were, however, much less frequently employed. Even when the online resources were

used, receptive learning resources were preferred by the instructors to interactive-media learning resources. Tasks or activities like online information searching or discussions were rarely organized by the instructors. Other types of interactive learning activities, such as student presentations or group discussions were also seldom exploited by the instructors.

Second, the current study found that among the factors which contributed to instructors' pedagogical decisions regarding culture teaching, the inside factors, in particular instructors' pre-existing cultural knowledge and attitudes toward culture teaching played critical roles. The instructors who were more positive toward culture teaching or who have more cultural knowledge seemed to include more cultural content in their classes in terms of quantity and frequency.

Third, an implementation gap was found to exist in the School caused by an insufficient school leadership. The Reform did not have a direct impact on the instructors' practice. When the reform initiatives were transmitted by the School to the instructors, the cultural component of the reform initiatives were filtered out by the Dean of the School and Chair of the Department. To these persons, culture teaching should not be endowed an equal status as the language teaching was. The only focus of College English courses should be the language teaching. The instructors' understanding and interpretation of the reform initiatives, which to a great extent were framed by the School heads' attitudes and transmission of the reform initiatives, was diverged from the policy-makers' expectation. As a result, the instructors misunderstood the reform initiatives. For them, the Reform was initiated to enhance teaching and learning of the language, not the culture. In summary, the reform initiatives were not transported

appropriately to the instructors. According to the literature (Hjern, 1982; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002), this transmission gap was obstructive to the implementation of the new cultural component of the Reform.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

In this chapter, I summarize and discuss the current study. I conclude with implications for teacher training programs in China as well as recommendations for policy-makers in China.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The literature on culture teaching in FL education has abundantly documented the importance and benefits of culture inclusion in FL classrooms (Byon, 2007; Byram, 1989, 1994; Byrd, Hlas, et al, 2011; Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002; Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1987; Crawford Lange & Lange, 1987; Fantini, 1997; Grittner, 1996; Hall, 2002; Jiang, 2000; Kramsch, 1993, 1995; Kramsch, Cain, & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996; Liddicoat & Crozet, 1997; Lustig & Koester, 1999; Moran, 2001; Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, & Colby, 2003; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005; Valdés, 1986). The literature has also revealed a need for more empirical research and more epistemologically diverse research, specifically when conducted in the contexts where traditional language-focused approaches still dominate the FL teaching. Such work is especially needed in China considering the recent reform initiatives in EFL teaching, which included a new cultural component. This dissertation study contributes to this need through a multi-case study analysis of four university-level EFL instructors' practice and perspectives on culture teaching and the reform initiatives. Classroom observations, stimulated recalls, and semi-structured interviews were designed to elicit data in order to answer the following two research questions:

How do the four Chinese instructors include culture in their university-level EFL classes?

1. How do they make curricular and instructional decisions regarding culture teaching?

Each of the primary research questions was answered by considering two sub-questions:

1. How do the four Chinese instructors include culture in their university-level EFL classes?
 - a. What cultural content do the instructors include?
 - b. What methods do they use to include the cultural content?
2. How do they make curricular and instructional decisions regarding culture teaching?
 - a. How do the instructors' pre-existing cultural knowledge and their perspectives on culture teaching inform their curricular and instructional decisions regarding culture teaching?
 - b. How do the nationwide EFL reform initiatives inform their decisions?

Multiple types of data were gathered in order to answer these questions.

Classroom observations were used to describe what cultural content the four Chinese EFL instructors taught and how they taught it in their classrooms. Stimulated recalls and individual interviews with the instructors (1) provided an explanation for instructors' curricular and instructional decisions regarding their culture teaching practice, and (2) aided in triangulation of the observation data. Two additional interviews—one with the

Dean of the School and one with a top educational policy-maker in China—were conducted to better understand the reform initiatives. They both added additional perspectives on the Reform initiatives.

The data collection and analysis of the current study were informed by constructivist theories. According to Constructivism, people's behaviors are the result of a construction process during which their understanding and interpretations of the outside world are framed by their pre-existing knowledge, experience, and perspectives (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Patton, 2001; Richardson, 1997; Stone-Wiske, 1998).

Following constructivist theories, the current study did not stop at a description of the instructor participants' pedagogical decisions. It probed the internal and external factors contributing to instructors' decisions. Informed by existing research (Byrd et al., 2011; Lazaraton, 2003; Pauchulo, 2005; Ryan, 2010; Sercu, 2002; Siskin, 2007; Shin, Eslami & Chang, 2011), instructors' perspectives on culture teaching, pre-existing culture knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the new policies, and perceptions of the School's attitudes toward culture teaching and the new policies were investigated. Other factors that emerged during the data collection were also identified and analyzed.

5.2 Discussion and Implications

5.2.1 The impact of the inside and outside factors on the instructors' practices

The current study revealed important findings about the four instructors' culture teaching practices as well as their perspectives on culture teaching in relationship to the Reform. Some of the findings aligned with findings in existing research, such as that

teachers generally included cultural content in their classrooms (Lazaraton, 2003; Pauchulo, 2005; Zhou, 2011). In the current study, all the instructors were found to talk about culture-related topics on their classrooms. However, many of these topics were delivered as cultural facts and mainly introduced through the instructors' presentations. It is hard to imagine that this kind of instruction helps promote students' cultural experience, awareness, and abilities to interpret or evaluate issues from different perspectives as scholars (Byram, 1989; Guilherme, 2002; Bennett, 1998; Kramsch, 1993; Paige et al., 2003) expect it to.

The result of the integration of the cultural facts in the classrooms was that teachers relied on stereotypical assumptions of the target culture, such as those made by Cai. It is obvious that in practice, cultural issues needed to be further unpacked rather than just delivered to the students as facts. As Kramsch (1998) suggests, it is more important for the teacher to negotiate cultural understandings with the students rather than to transmit what he/she knows about the topic. I argue that any approach that engages students in questioning and comparing processes with multiple perspectives on an issue (through texts of any kind) is preferable to the teacher anecdote or assertion approach. For example, it would be so much more effective for the instructors to explore cultural assertions/stereotypes *with* students, rather than impose their unexamined ideas about vastly different cultures *on* students. Another example was that when assigned presentation tasks to the students, the instructor could provide more explicit instruction and guidelines on the tasks to the presenters before the presentations and offer constructive feedback to the presenters after the presentations. In other words, with more instructional time devoted to culture, more opportunities for students to learn not only

about a specific culture, but also about ways of thinking about the exploration of self and others within and beyond their own experiences.

This dissertation study also aligns with existing research (Lazaraton, 2003; Pauchulo, 2005; Sercu, 2002; Zhou, 2011) by revealing that all the instructors supported culture teaching. In the current study, all the instructors expressed positive attitudes toward culture teaching. However, they did not agree on the role of culture and potential benefits of culture teaching for EFL education. Two of them regarded culture as an essential component of the language classroom. They advocated that including culture could facilitate students' language learning and promote their cultural knowledge and communicative competence. The other two instructors, however, took culture teaching as a tool to enliven the classroom atmosphere rather than a tool to facilitate language learning or develop cultural awareness. This divergence in instructors' attitudes toward culture has not been reported by the existing research on the issue.

Another finding which is consistent with the existing research is the relationship between the instructors' attitudes toward culture teaching and their practice. The current study found that the instructors who had more positive attitudes toward culture teaching included more cultural content. This was especially true in the cases of Chang, Lu, and Yang. However, in the case of Cai, the instructor's pre-existing cultural knowledge played a more critical role than the instructor's attitudes. Cai was one of the two instructors who devalued the importance of culture teaching. However, he was very confident in his cultural knowledge. As a result of his abundant cultural knowledge and supported by his confidence, he included a lot of cultural content that was composed of a broad range of cultural topics. Therefore, both instructors' attitudes toward culture

teaching and their pre-existing cultural knowledge were found to be important factors for their pedagogical decisions regarding culture teaching.

5.2.2 The transmission gap which impeded implementation of Reform initiatives

Besides the inside factors (attitudes and pre-existing cultural knowledge), the College English Teaching Reform was also investigated as an important potential outside factor for instructors' pedagogical decisions. According to Constructivist theories, outside forces act on human beings. These forces are then internalized and steer their behaviours. During this internalization process, the impact of the outside forces are filtered by people's pre-existing knowledge, previous experience, and developed perspectives on the issue (McLaughlin, 1987; Palmer & Rangel, 2011; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). Inspired by these theorists, the instructors' knowledge about the Reform, attitudes toward the Reform, perceptions of its implementation in the School, and perceptions of its impact on the School's policies were explored through individual interviews. A cross-analysis of the interviews and classroom observations indicated that not only participants' knowledge and understanding of the Reform was limited, they even misunderstood the reform initiatives. To them, the Reform was initiated to enhance language teaching and learning; culture was never the focus of the Reform. To investigate the divergence between the instructors' understanding of the reform initiatives and the policy-makers' and the School heads' interpretations of the Reform initiatives, an interview with the primary policy-maker and an interview with the Dean of the Foreign Languages and Cultures were conducted.

According to the Dean of the School of Foreign Languages and Literatures at ZU, the Reform aimed to improve the quality of instructors' language teaching and students' scores in the nation-wide English proficiency tests. For him, culture inclusion was beneficial in enlivening the classroom. This interpretation of the Reform and culture teaching was consistent with some of the instructors' interpretations. However, according to the analysis of the interview with Professor Hu, Chair of the National Foreign Language Teaching Direction and Advisory Board under the Ministry of Education, this interpretation was a misunderstanding of the Reform. Hu said that the new cultural component in the Reform was really included as an effective tool to improve students' language application and communicative competence. This study showed that the new policies were neither internalized by the instructors nor by the Dean in the ways in which were they intended by those involved with the national reform initiatives.

To look for the causes of the misunderstanding of instructors, I studied the channels through which the new policies were communicated to them. I found that the School heads' introductions to the new policies at regular department meetings were the only source for instructors' knowledge about the new policies. In other words, the instructors' access to the new policies was limited to oral summaries in department meetings. Therefore, their understanding of the new policies were to a great extent framed by the Dean's and Department chair's interpretations and not supported through training opportunities or other efforts that could come through administrative channels. According to the instructors, culture teaching was neither emphasized nor encouraged by ZU. Moreover, they received neither details about the new policies, nor directions about

how to include more cultural content in teaching. According to their interviews, the instructors did not feel pressure or stimulus to invest in the study of culture teaching pedagogies or the new policies. The School had not fully performed instructional or transformational leadership in the process of introducing the reform policies and facilitating instructors' implementation. As a consequence, the reform initiatives were not completely internalized or operationalized by the instructors. According to research (Sercu, 2002; Zhou, 2011), the manner in which new policies are transmitted to educators is very crucial for the implementation of a new educational policy because the policy can only be successfully implemented in local contexts when it is communicated accurately and faithfully to the local agents through school administration. However, in the current study, a transmission gap was found to exist between the policy-makers' expectations and the instructors' interpretations of the policies.

5.2.3 Suggestions for bridging the implementation gap

Suggestions for school administrators.

This transmission gap could be one of the major obstructions to the implementation of the new policies. In the current study, the desired outcome of the Reform, at the time these data were collected, was not fully realized. In light of this situation, I suggested that the school administrators need to improve both their instructional and transformational leadership. According to the suggestions from the literature, some of the ways for the School to improve its leadership includes: 1) talking with the instructors about their perspectives on culture teaching and the Reform, 2) fostering their reflection on the reform initiatives and practical classroom teaching strategies, and 3) promoting instructors' professional growth in learning knowledge and

strategies to teach culture (Balse & Balse, 2000; Southworth, 2002).

The School heads may also organize college-wide meetings, explain the new policies to the instructors, and support instructors' study of the new policies. According to the literature, the knowledge of the educational context is an essential component of teacher knowledge. It plays an important role of contributing to teachers' pedagogical decisions (Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Shulman, 1987). Constructivists also emphasize the role of the teacher's contextual knowledge because they think that teaching is an occurrence of the context (Pepin, 1998; Prawat, 1992). Therefore, the knowledge of the educational context, including the educational policies, "plays a key role to teaching and learning" (Prawat, 1992, p. 380). In the college-wide meetings, the School heads could do the following: provide paper or electronic copies of the new policies to the instructors, encourage them to read through the documents, organize group learning or discussion about instructors' reflection of the new policies, and offer guidance to the instructors in translating the policies into their practice. The school administration may also adjust the existing policies of the School and/ develop new policies that support the reform initiatives.

Suggestions for policy-makers.

The policy-makers could provide assistance to help the School improve their leadership in transmission of the reform initiatives and training of the instructors. This could be realized by organizing workshops centered on implementing the Reform and new policies. In this scenario, the local instructors would be invited to participate in these workshops. They would have opportunities to read the original policy documents, conduct direct dialogues with the policy makers, and learn the policy-makers'

expectations of the teachers. The instructors may also be encouraged to share their interpretations and reflections on the reform initiatives at the workshop. Policy-makers could provide direct feedback to the instructors, identify their potential misunderstanding of the new policies, offer guidance in implementing the new policies in their classrooms, and provide methods to overcome the obstacles that the instructors face when teaching the culture or implement the new policies. The workshops could also be good channels for the policy-makers to hear from the classroom teachers regarding the implementation of the new policies, based on which they could modify or improve the policies.

Involving the instructors in the policy-making process could be very important for the policy implementation. According to the literature (Shulman, 1987), teachers are more likely to change their behaviors when they are involved in the decision-making process and recognize the potential advantages of the change. However, when they do not believe in the necessity for change, they may be unwilling to adjust their behaviors for the change. In the current study, the instructors' access to the new policies was largely limited to what was communicated about the policies by their administration. Therefore, instructors' understandings of the new policies only stemmed from the School heads' interpretations. Additionally, instructors' attitudes toward culture teaching were primarily framed by their perceptions of the School heads' attitudes. As a result, teachers did not perceive that there were many changes occurring as a consequence of the reform. Neither the Department nor the School made adjustments per the new policies. Therefore, the instructors felt no pressure or stimulus to promote their cultural teaching knowledge or pedagogy. In this case, involving them in the decision-making

process could have stimulated their motivation to build up their knowledge about the Reform or to make changes to the way that they taught the culture. It could have also been a good way to examine if and how the reform initiatives were being implemented in the local contexts.

Besides providing training for the school instructors, the policy-makers can also help the school administrators and heads internalize and contextualize the reform initiatives (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). This could be realized by organizing workshops specifically for this group (e.g. administrators, school heads, etc.). At these workshops the school administrators could receive guidance from the policy-makers about how to transmit the reform initiatives to their local contexts and how to adjust their own school policies accordingly to the reform initiatives. Such efforts of the policy-makers and school administrators would reinforce the transmission and contextualization of the reform initiatives in the local contexts.

5.2.4 Suggestions for the professionalization of Chinese EFL teaching

Suggestions for reducing instructors' stereotypical assumptions.

Besides the internal and external factors for the EFL instructors' pedagogical decisions, this dissertation study also sheds light on their practice. The strengths of their culture teaching practice, such as the extensiveness of the culture variants and topics that they included in the classrooms, were revealed. The weaknesses of their teaching were discovered as well; the primary weakness was found to be the occasional occurrence of instructors' stereotypical assumptions of the target culture(s).

According to the literature, a stereotypical cultural assumption is "labeling or categorising particular groups of people, usually in a negative way, according to

preconceived ideas or broad generalisations about them – and then assuming that all members of that group will think and behave identically” (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002, p.21). Such labelling emerges when FL/L2 learners who live in a specific culture are not exposed to the multiple perspectives of outsiders (Itakura, 2004). Stereotypical cultural assumptions are especially typical for learners who have scarce opportunities to experience different cultures or societies. For these learners, their impressions of the target language(s) and culture(s) are shaped in part by information disseminated from the mass media, and in part by the advertising and experiences of encounters with the target culture (Allen, 2004; Byon, 2007; Drewelow, 2013; Itakura, 2004; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005). Educators advocate that stereotypical cultural assumptions can undermine FL students’ self-positioning when they encounter the target culture, or strive to learn about any culture to them. Helping students avoid/reduce cultural stereotypes have become a top priority for FL/L2 teachers (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002).

In the current study, stereotypes of the “typical” English speaker were evident in the classrooms, although the content of these stereotypes differed. ‘Westerners’ were characterized as being born tall and strong, open to sexuality, and Western women were characterized as being independent of men. In the U.S. blue-collar workers were all well paid and young people lived independent of their parents once graduated from high school; Europeans were characterized as skilled craftsmen. The analysis of the interviews showed that these stereotypes were mainly developed from information advertised by mass media. Mass media and new technology have been highlighted by many researchers as tools that can facilitate the inclusion of culture in FL classroom. These tools may include authentic materials and resources that help promote learners’

cultural experiences and their ability to think from different perspectives (Altstaedter, 2009; Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Hsu, 2006; Moore, Morales, & Carel, 1998; Wang, 2009). However, when the FL learners do not have many cultural experiences or diverse cultural perspectives, the fragments of the target culture provided by the mass media are prone to be enlarged and taken as whole pictures of the culture (Jernigan & Moore, 1997; Pauchulo, 2005); in literature this is how stereotypes and overgeneralization were developed.

In the current study, the four instructor participants were native Chinese speakers from China. Like their students, they were EFL learners. None of them have lived in other countries. The cultural topics prescribed in the textbooks and standardized curriculum were not what they had experienced in a real context, but rather what they heard from others or learned from mass media. When they taught about the countries to which they had never been, they had to fully rely on the materials in the textbooks or fragments of culture that they collected from mass media. These materials provided cultural facts for the instructors' teaching rather than perspectives of the cultures' insiders. Therefore, it was hard for them to read the materials from insiders' perspectives—perspectives that they had never experienced. As Jernigan and Moore (1997) concluded, the instructors' lack of cultural experience and perspectives, plus a lack of interest, led to the frequent occurrence of stereotypes in the classroom.

The research points to suggestions for the teachers to reduce cultural stereotyping. Using new technology to acquire authentic materials of the target culture for the students is frequently recommended. Authentic materials help promote students' cultural experience as well as providing them with various perspectives to interpret the

issues in different cultures (Cummins, 1988; Morre, 1999). They can do their own cultural research with these resources. Thus, the students do not need to solely rely on the instructor's presentations on cultural issues. This approach is also realized by Chinese educators. They advocate that involving authentic materials through the new technology is especially important for Chinese EFL education (Luk, 2012; Wang, 2008; Zhou, 2011) because a large number of the EFL teachers in China do not have experience of living in the target culture (Hsu, 2006; Krashen, 1982; Luk, 2012; Tsou, 2005). They cannot and do not need to be the sole provider of cultural materials or the authority for cultural consultation (Luk, 2012). Having abundant authentic cultural materials helps free the teachers and improve students' cultural experience. Knowing how to use authentic materials, on the other hand, is a different issue as teaching the processes of cultural inquiry with authentic materials requires a great deal of skill. Teacher-training programs could also help the instructors learn these skills.

Chinese educators and researchers have already come to some consensus on the importance of using the new technology to search for authentic cultural materials. However, they do not devote efforts to studying how to use the interactive online resources to reduce cultural stereotypes. Many Western researchers have found that the interactive online resources, such as e-mail, Wiki, YouTube, and blogs provide opportunities for FL learners to have direct communication with native speakers and more authentically experience the target culture (Moore, Morales, & Carel, 1998; Pauchulo, 2005; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005; Storme & Derakhshani, 2002). This is especially needed in Chinese EFL classes because both the students and teachers do not have much interactive experience with English native speakers. Direct interactions with

native speakers help both the teachers and the students get closer to the target culture and thus, reduce their stereotypes. Using new technology will help both the instructors and the students reduce their held stereotypes about target cultures.

Suggestions for improving instructors' cultural and pedagogical knowledge.

Besides instructors' use of stereotypical assumptions in extemporaneous discussion, the current study found that their lack of pedagogical strategies might also impede their culture teaching practice. According to the literature, teachers' pedagogical knowledge is as important as their content knowledge (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Cochran, et al. 1991; Lafayette, 1993; Shulman, 1987; wing, 1993). It determines if and how the teacher can transmit the content knowledge to the students and promote their learning and reflection (Shulman, 1987). However, in the current study, the instructors had never received formal training for culture teaching. As a consequence, the instructors were not aware of what effective culture teaching was. Their decisions about what cultural materials to use, about when, and how to carry out culture teaching in the class to a great extent were arbitrary. Echoing what Brooks and Brooks (1991) found, the instructors used the same traditional language teaching methods through which they had been taught. The cultural phenomena and facts described in the textbooks and standardized curriculum were the main sources of their cultural content. Because of the instructors' lack of pedagogy, these cultural facts were often presented through the instructors' presentations with anecdotal information consisting of stories of their personal impression of the target culture as an outsider. Such a transmission of knowledge is what constructivists reject. According to Constructivist theories, teaching should "give learners the opportunities for concrete, contextually meaningful experience

through which they can search for patterns, raise questions, and model, interpret, and defend their own strategies and ideas” (Fosnot, 2005, p. ix). In the current study, the teaching of comprehension, reasoning, transformation, or reflection that Schulman (1987) emphasized, was rarely seen in the observed classes.

EFL teachers’ lack of pedagogical knowledge has been noticed by some teacher educators in China. Zhou (2005) conducted a nation-wide survey among teachers of English at the college-level. Her survey revealed a discrepancy between teachers’ beliefs and their classroom behavior. Her study also indicated that this discrepancy was caused by a lack of pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of language learning theories. Wang (2012) found a gap in the curriculum of teacher preparation programs in his dissertation study. Based on these findings, the educators (Wang, 2009; Wang & Wang, 2011; Zhang, 2004) called teacher education programs to include more courses about teaching pedagogy in their curriculum. The findings of the current study point to an apparent need for in-service teacher training programs that particularly focus on culture teaching pedagogy.

Suggestions for teacher-training programs.

In the current study, all instructors were aware of their pedagogical knowledge about culture teaching. Most of them expressed a desire to learn how to teach culture. However, it is neither possible nor necessary for EFL instructors to achieve all the knowledge and skills that they need through personal endeavors. This is what in-service teacher training programs could help with. Teacher training programs could enhance the instructors’ enthusiasm for culture teaching and provide them with systematic training on teaching culture in local educational institutions. To achieve this, programs may

invite researchers who have expertise in culture teaching studies to collaborate with EFL educators to develop curriculum for teacher training programs. The curriculum should include cultural and culture teaching content and involve instructors in intensive learning of the subjects. Through such training, the instructors would be able to: 1) identify and interpret the cultural issues which emerged in the curriculum and other teaching materials, 2) select appropriate authentic cultural materials for teaching, 3) use various teaching methods to facilitate students' culture learning, 4) assess students' learning outcomes, 5) reflect on their own culture teaching practice, and 6) develop their own teaching theories about culture teaching.

These attempts of teacher training programs will help the teachers transform their understanding, knowledge, learning skills, and desired attitudes regarding culture into pedagogical representations and classroom practice. More importantly, such attempts could promote comprehension, reasoning, transformation, and reflection of teaching (Shulman, 1987). The actions of both policy-makers and teacher education programs will help to reinforce the implementation of the Reform and professionalization of EFL teaching in China.

5.3 Study Limitations

The current study is by no means a complete analysis of the culture teaching in university-level EFL education in China. It is only a preliminary step for multiple studies on the issue. The following are some of the limitations and the possible research projects that stem from the current study.

First, this multi-case study used a convenience sample of participants. All the instructor participants were recruited via the researcher's social network. Therefore, the

findings had limited referential meanings for understanding of the issue in a bigger context, university-level EFL education in China. However, a convenience sample did not mean the participants were chosen randomly. As described in Chapter 3, two criteria were set when participants were recruited: the participants had graduate level degrees in English teaching or related subjects and had considerable teaching experience. Participants selected based on these criteria could to some extent represent the instructors teaching in the School of Foreign Languages and Literatures at ZU.

Second, there was an obvious limitation with the research methodology, in particular the methods used to collect observation data. Only 48 hours of classes were observed. This limited amount of observation could have resulted in an insufficient description of participants' classroom teaching. A longitudinal study would help obtain a more comprehensive understanding of participants' teaching.

Third, another limitation with the methodology was the degree to which the methods probed attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge. The conclusions regarding these aspects were mainly built on their self-reports in the interviews. Although what these self-reported data might not reveal completely are the participants' real perspectives, attitudes, or knowledge, self-reports were the main approaches for researchers who qualitatively explored teachers' perspectives on culture teaching.

5.4 Future Research

There are two avenues for future research. First, due to time and space constraints, only instructors' perspectives and practices were investigated in this dissertation study. Students' voices, which can be also important for understanding the issue, were not included. Therefore, a future avenue for research could be to explore students' culture

learning process and outcomes, and attitudes toward culture inclusion and perceptions about their instructors' practice. It will provide new perspectives to understand instructors' practice and pedagogical decisions as well as reveal practical needs for teaching and for policy improvement.

An action research project could be another avenue of research. This dissertation study focused on describing instructors' practice and their perspectives on culture teaching instead of attempting to change the situation. In the future, designing cultural curriculum and training instructors/pre-service teachers to use the curriculum as well as specific strategies to teach culture in their classrooms would be a good way to translate the theories into practice.

Above all, this dissertation study sheds light on university-level EFL instructors' perspectives and practice of culture teaching. It reveals needs and expectations of instructors for teacher training programs, policy-makers, and school administrators. It needs to be recognized that no single effort can perfect the implementation of culture teaching approach or the new culture component of the Reform in EFL classrooms in China. To achieve the aim, a concerted effort and common endeavor of all sides are needed. For the policy-makers, more systematic and specified policies with clarification about the expectations on the instructors and requirements for classroom teaching are needed. For school leaders and administrators, reinforced instructional and transformational leadership would help the school contextualize the new policies, transform the policies into requirements of the school, help the instructors develop professional knowledge and skills, and direct them in integrating policies initiatives into their practice. For the teacher training programs, more cultural and pedagogical content

should be included in the curriculum to promote instructors' knowledge and strategies about culture inclusion. The instructors also need to be self-initiated into the development of their own culture teaching knowledge and skills as well as study of educational policies. There also needs to be sufficient and effective communication among the policy-makers, school administrators, teacher educators, and instructors. With the cooperative efforts from all these sides, culture teaching and the Reform can be operationalized in the real contexts rather than staying on the paper.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Protocols for Instructors

First Phase Data Collection

1. What is “culture?” What is “English culture(s)?”
2. Do you think FL teachers need to integrate culture in their language instruction? If you do, could you explain why you think so? If you do not, could you also explain for it?
3. If you agree with the cultural integration, where do you usually get cultural information? What cultural content do you think need to be taught and what methods can be used?
4. Do you teach cultural issues in your own classes?
 - a. If you do, how frequently you teach them? How much time you usually devote in doing it?
 - b. What cultural content do you teach? What methods you use? Can you give examples?
 - c. Do you assess students’ culture learning as well as their language learning?
 - i. If you do, how do you do it?
 - ii. If you do not, what are the reasons for not doing it?
 - d. Do you have cultural objectives as well as language objectives?
 - e. Do you feel any barriers or difficulties in implementing culture teaching in your practice? If you do, what are they?
5. If you do not teach culture in your classes, what are the possible barriers or considerations?

6. Have you ever heard about the English Education Reform and the College English Curriculum Requirements? If you do, what do you know about them?
7. Do you notice the new cultural component? What does it mean to you? Does it have influence on your views or teaching practice?
8. Do you have any concerns about implementing culture teaching in Chinese EFL classes? Do you have any suggestions?

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

Section 1. Instructors' general learning and teaching background

1. Could you talk about yourself, such as your age, your hometown, and your position in the school?
2. Could you describe your educational background, such as the college and graduate programs that you attended?
3. Could you describe your teaching experience?
4. Could you describe the College English classes that you are currently teaching, such as the enrollment of the classes, the textbooks/curriculum used, the evaluations?

Section 2. Instructors' cultural knowledge and attitudes towards culture teaching

5. What do you think “culture” is? Could you give examples?
6. What do you think “English culture” is? Could you also give examples?
7. How did you learn about teaching culture?
8. How important do you think culture is in EFL classes?
9. What kind of culture(s) do you think that teachers should teach?
10. How much cultural content do you think should be integrated into the class compared with language instruction?
11. In what way these cultural content should be taught?

Section 3. Instructors' culture learning experience

12. Let's talk about your formal preparation to teach culture. Have you ever taken classes related to culture?
13. If you have taken classes related to culture, what are those classes?
 - a. Could you describe the content of the classes?

- b. What were the percentages that culture content took in those classes? Or did they focus on culture(s)?
 - c. What cultural knowledge did you learn from these classes?
 - d. How are these cultural knowledge helpful for your teaching?
 - e. How important that you feel such classes could be necessary for English-majored students who think about to teach after their graduations?
14. If you haven't taken any classes related to culture, why do you think the programs did not involve culture in the curriculum?

Section 4. Instructors' culture training experience

15. Have you ever learn to teach cultural issues or received training on it?
16. If you have, could you describe it and tell me how much helpful it is for your teaching?
17. If you have not, where and how did you obtain the strategies that you use when teaching cultural issues?

Section 5. Instructors' reflection on own culture teaching practice

18. If you do teach culture in your classes, in what cases do you teach it? Could you give some examples?
19. What is the approximate percentage of culture in your classes?
20. How frequently do you teach culture?
21. How much time do you usually devote in doing it?
22. If you set cultural objectives as well as language objectives when you designed your curriculum or prepared the teaching materials, could you describe your cultural objects?

23. If you do not have such objects, could you explain why?
24. What kind of cultural issues do you usually cover? Could you list some of them?
25. Could you explain why you chose these topics?
26. Where did you get the sources that you used when you talked about these cultural topics?
27. How did you integrate cultural topics into your curriculum or teaching materials?
28. How do you usually integrate the culture into the language teaching?
29. Could you recall some specific content involved when you talked about each of these cultural topics?
30. Could you recall the processes that you taught them? May I have examples?
31. Could you describe the model upon which you taught these cultural contents and if there is any?
32. How is students' culture learning usually assessed?
33. What are the barriers or difficulties for you when teaching culture in practice?
34. How do you think you are going to overcome these barriers?
35. What kind of help you expect from others that will facilitate you to overcome these barriers?

Section 6. Instructors' understanding of the attitudes of the department toward culture teaching

36. Did you hear culture teaching discussed by department heads?
37. If you did, what are their attitudes toward it?
38. Do you know the attitudes of your colleagues?
39. Do you know the attitudes of school administrators?

Section 7. Instructors' understanding of the Reform and interpretation of the new cultural component in *the Requirements*

A) Knowledge and understanding of the Reform

40. Last year when we talked, you told me that you heard about the English Education Reform, may I ask how you learned about it?
41. Do you know why government initiated this reform?
42. What are the aims of the reform?
43. Who are involved in the reform?
44. Do you know the attitudes of the department heads toward this reform?
45. How did they explain or interpret the reform?
46. Do you know the attitudes of school administrators?
47. Do you think this reform should be implemented in your school? Could you explain why that you think so?
48. According to your observation, how is the reform being implemented in practice?
49. Are there any other things you like to talk about the Reform?

B) Knowledge and interpretation of the *Requirements*

50. Since you told me that you had knowledge about the *College English Curriculum Requirements*, how did you learn about this document?
51. Why do you think it was formulated?
52. Who are involved in this document?
53. What are the main issues discussed in the document?
54. Could you have a look of following paragraph and answer the questions:

The objective of College English is to develop students' ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of China's social development and international exchanges...

- a. What is this “general cultural awareness” refers to?
- b. What kind of specific aspects does it include?
- c. Do you understand why this general cultural awareness is identified as one of the objectives as well as the abilities of using English in practice and the studying independently?

55. In the document, there are specific requirements listed as following (p.3-4):

(Students who reach the intermediate level) should generally be able to read essays on general topics in popular newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries... (As for the translation abilities), students will translate texts on familiar topics in popular newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries...

- a. This documents is defined as “teaching requirements”, but these requirements look like expectations for the students, instead of for the teacher. What do you think about it?
- b. The document list separate requirements for students' abilities of using the five skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing, and translation). Does it

mean language is defined as these five skills? Is this idea congruent with the concept of Communicative Competence?

56. Please read the identification of College English classes,

College English is not only a language course that provides basic knowledge about English, but also a capacity enhancement course that helps students to broaden their horizons and learn about different cultures in the world. It not only serves as an instrument, but also has humanistic values. When designing College English courses, therefore, it is necessary to take into full consideration the development of students' cultural capacity and the teaching of knowledge about different culture in the world.

- a. Here, one of the objectives of College English is indicated explicitly: helping students to know different cultures through learning cultural knowledge. What does Cultural Knowledge refer to? Is the cultural knowledge the only aspect of Culture to be taught in class?
- b. The document does not tell how this objective could be achieved. Do you have any idea?

C). Instructors' knowledge and interpretation of the new cultural component in the Requirements

When the participant can explicitly explain their understandings of the document, questions in Section (a) will be raised; when they could not, the question in Section (b) will be raised instead. This design is based on my experience in the preliminary study phase.

In the pilot study, when I asked if they had heard about the document, all participants answered that they definitely knew about the Requirements because it had been discussed several times in the regular department meetings. However, when I asked if they could describe the content of the document, they hesitated and said they could not remember those details. Therefore, I prepare two tracks of question in case such a situation repeats.

(a)

57. What is the culture-related content in this document?
58. Could you describe how these content are congruent or conflict with your personal views on culture teaching in College English classes?
59. Do you know why the new cultural component was involved in the official teaching requirements?
60. What are the teachers expected to do then?
61. How is this new policy being implemented in your school?
62. How do you think this new policy could change the way teachers teach?
63. How does it impact or bring any changes to your own teaching?
64. What are the changes/impact which might be brought by the new policy in the school?

(b)

It is hard to memorize the details of the Requirements, do you mind spending some time rereading the document? When you read, please pay special attention to the highlighted sections.

65. After rereading the document, could you tell me who are involved in the document?

66. What does the document talk about?
67. What are the main issues discussed in it?
68. The highlighted sections are about culture teaching, how do you understand or interpret these sections?
69. In what else official documents or policies that the culture were emphasized?
70. Why do you think culture is emphasized in this document?
71. Do you agree with this new cultural component? Could you explain why?
72. How is this new cultural component being implemented in your school?
73. What are the changes in the school which you think might be related to this new component?
74. What changes do you think this new cultural component may bring to your teaching in the future?
75. What changes do you think this new cultural component may bring to the school?

Section 8. Instructors' perception of the implementation of the new policy

76. What kind of training or directions about how to implement the new policy have you ever received?
77. What impact does this new policy bring to the department?
78. How will the implementation of the new policy facilitate the teaching and learning in your classroom?
79. Who else do you think should know about the new policy?
80. What are the barriers for you or your colleagues to implement the new policy?
81. What do you expect the department to do to help you overcome these barriers and implement the new policy of fostering culture teaching?

Section 9. Instructors' understanding of the attitudes of the department toward the new policy

- 82. How did the college dean or other head discuss the new policy or the new cultural component in the Requirements
- 83. How did they interpret the new policy?
- 84. What were their attitudes toward the new policy when they talked about it?
- 85. How did other teachers in your department talk about the new policy?
- 86. What kind of training or directions about how to implement the new policy have you ever received?
- 87. How do you think implementing the new policy will facilitate the teaching and learning in your classroom?
- 88. What are the barriers for you or your colleagues to implement the new policy?
- 89. What do you expect the department to do to help you overcome these barriers and implement the new policy of fostering culture teaching?
- 90. Who else do you think should know the new policy?

Section 10. Overall feedback and suggestions from instructors

- 91. Do you have any other concerns about implementing the new policy in your classrooms?
- 92. What other suggestions do you have to make the implementation more successful?

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

Exploring the perspectives of **Professor Hu**, Dean of the School, on culture teaching and the new policy

Section 1. His Teaching & Learning Experience

1. Could you describe your background, such as the education, teaching experience, and administration experience?
2. Could you describe your teaching beliefs and research focuses?

Section 2. His knowledge about culture teaching and attitudes toward it

As a professor in EFL education, dean of the College of Foreign Languages, and Chair of Gansu College English Education Research Association, how do you think that EFL teachers should integrate cultural content in their language instruction?

3. What role do you think that culture can play in the classrooms, particularly in the College English classrooms?
4. To what extent that you think culture teaching is important for EFL education in China? Could you explain it?
5. What kind of culture(s) do you think teachers should teach?
6. How much cultural content do you think is should be integrated into the class compared with the language instruction?
7. In what way do you think that the cultural content can be taught?

Section 3. His knowledge and interpretation of the English education Reform

8. Do you know why the government initiated such a reform?
9. What is the aim of the reform?
10. What is the content of this reform?

11. Who are involved in the reform?
12. What change is the reform expected to bring to Chinese EFL education?
13. As the dean, what is your attitude toward this reform?
14. As you perceive, what is the impact of this reform on your school (such as the curriculum, textbooks, expectations on teachers and students, evaluation, administration)? Are these impacts positive? Why?
15. What has the department done to help the implementation of the reform?
16. What further work or improvement do you think the department need to do?
17. Are any other things you like to talk about the reform and its implementation in your school?

Section 4. His knowledge and interpretation of the new culture component in the *College English Curriculum Requirements*

18. How much do you know about the *College English Curriculum Requirements*?
19. How did you get to know it?
20. Do you know why it was formulated?
21. Who are involved in this document?
22. What are the main issues discussed in the document?
23. Why does this official document for the first time involves a cultural component and emphasizes cultural integration in EFL teaching?
24. What are the corresponding contents in the document?
25. How do you understand these contents? (*If he does not memorize the whole document in his mind, it is understandable. He will be provided a paper copy which might be helpful for him to review the content and organize his thoughts*).

26. How is these content congruent with your own views on culture teaching in College English classes?

27. *The objective of College English is to develop students' ability to use English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future studies and careers as well as social interactions they will be able to communicate effectively, and at the same time enhance their ability to study independently and improve their general cultural awareness so as to meet the needs of China's social development and international exchanges...*

- a. Could you tell me what this “general cultural awareness” refers to?
- b. What kind of specific aspects does it include?
- c. Why this general cultural awareness is identified as one of the objectives as well as the abilities of using English in practice and the studying independently?

28. In the document, there are specific requirements listed as following (p.3-4):

(Students who reach the intermediate level) should generally be able to read essays on general topics in popular newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries... (As for the translation abilities), students will translate texts on familiar topics in popular newspapers and magazines published in English-speaking countries...

- a. This documents is called teaching requirements, but these requirements look like expectations for the students, instead of for the teacher. What do you think about it?

- b. The document list separate requirements for students' abilities of using the five skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing, and translation).

Does it mean language is defined as these five skills? Is this idea congruent with the concept of Communicative Competence?

29. Please read the identification of College English classes: *College English is not only a language course that provides basic knowledge about English, but also a capacity enhancement course that helps students to broaden their horizons and learn about different cultures in the world. It not only serves as an instrument, but also has humanistic values. When designing College English courses, therefore, it is necessary to take into full consideration the development of students' cultural capacity and the teaching of knowledge about different culture in the world.*

- a. Here, one of the objectives of College English is indicated explicitly: helping students to know different cultures through learning cultural knowledge. What does Cultural Knowledge refer to? Is the cultural knowledge the only aspect of Culture to be taught in class?
- b. The document does not tell how this objective could be achieved. Do you have any idea?

30. Based on these new cultural-related requirements, what are the teachers expected to do then?

31. What are the department/administrators expected to do?

Section 5. His perception of Teachers' implementation of culture teaching and reform initiatives

32. How is this new policy being implemented in your school?
33. What impact does it bring to the school?
34. What are the attitudes of teachers towards the new cultural policy?
35. What impact does this new policy have on teachers' routine work, such as their classroom teaching or evaluation of students?
36. What have you and other administrators done to help teachers to integrate the culture in their classrooms (such as organizing workshops on the new policy or training teachers to teach culture)?
37. What are the barriers or restrictions that you have experienced during this process? Where are they from (such as from the teachers, school, or students)?
38. What kind of help or direction do you think the department or teachers need for implementing the new policy successfully?
39. How successful is this implementation in your school thus far?
40. What kind of work you are going to do to promote the implementation and the teachers in the future?
41. If you were asked to give suggestions to some other school about how to make the implementation of the new cultural policy, what are you going to say?

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

Exploring **Professor Jia**'s (Chair of the Advisory Board) interpretation of the new cultural component in the Reform and *College English Curriculum Requirements* and policy-makers' expectations on its implementation in local educational contexts

Section 1. Teaching and learning experience, and experience working as Chair of the Board

1. What is your position at the university and in the Ministry of Education?
2. Could you describe your background, such as the education, teaching experience, and administration experience?
3. Could you describe your teaching beliefs and research focuses?
4. Could you describe your work in the Ministry of Education?

Section 2. Creation of the new policies and the Requirements

5. Why did the Ministry of Education formulate *College English Curriculum Requirements*? What was the intention of the policy?
6. Who were involved in the formulation?
7. What was your role in the formulation?
8. How was the content of the new policy was decided and composed?
9. Could you briefly describe the content of the document?

Section 3. Interpretation of the new cultural component in the new policy

10. People have noticed that this is the first time that "culture" was involved in official curriculum requirements. Why was this new cultural component involved? What were your consideration?
11. What were the preparation work that had been done before this was decided?

12. What kind of impacts did you expect such a new cultural component would bring to the College English education?
13. What changes did you expect the school and classroom teachers to undertake in order to cooperate with this new issue?

Section 4. Cultural framework in the Requirements

14. In this document, intercultural communication is defined as one fundamental component of the classes as well as the linguistic competence and learning strategies. Based on the identification of the three components, teaching objectives are to develop students' intercultural communicative competence, as well as their ability to use the language in real social interactions and ability to conduct independent study. What is your interpretation of such a new status of cultural component in college English education?
15. The intercultural communicative competence are described consisting of 3 dimensions: cultural knowledge (general and specific), cultural awareness, and intercultural communicative skills. How do you define these aspects?
16. This cultural framework echoes Byram's (2002) theories about intercultural communication. All the cultural dimensions are included except for the "cultural attitudes". Although the dimension of "cultural skills" is included, no specific skills, such as interpreting and relating (Byram, 2002) are identified. For what consideration that "cultural attitudes" are not included?
17. The teaching objective of constructing intercultural communicative competence has not been reflected in any of the specific requirements. All the requirements

are set for constructing linguistic competence, speaking and listening skills in particular. It is not reflected in the evaluation either. How do you explain this?

Section 5. Implementation of the new cultural component

18. What kind of work have you done to implement these culture-related requirements?
19. Did you give teachers and local schools training or follow-up directions?
20. How are the culture-related requirements being implemented in schools?
21. What feedback regarding the culture-related requirements have you received?
22. A new set of textbooks have been prescribed as official teaching materials for the College English classes since two years ago. Some teachers said there were more cultural contents in these textbooks compared with the older ones. How do you think about this opinion? Do you agree with it?
23. How are the culture-related requirements being implemented in your school?
24. What changes/impact have they brought to your school environment?
25. According to your perception or schools' feedback, what are the concerns or restrictions for local schools and teachers to implement the culture-related requirements?
26. What are your concerns for the implementation as policy-maker?
27. What do you suggest local implementation agents to do to promote the implementation?
28. What future work you will do to enhance and promote the implementation of the culture-related requirements?

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol 1. Cai

1. When I interviewed you in the summer of 2014, I heard that you had never read the documents of the Reform. I gave you a copy of the *Standards* last week. Has anything changed about your understanding of culture teaching after you read the document?
 - a. If there is, could you describe the change?
 - b. If there is not, could you explain why?
2. After last summer when we met, did the School heads talked about culture teaching or the new cultural component of the Reform?
 - a. If they did, what were their attitudes toward it?
 - b. If they did not, do you know why they did not do it?
3. Have you see any changes happening in the School, such as new policies or requirements for the teachers as a consequence of the implementation of the new policies related to culture teaching?
4. Last time when I interviewed you, you talked about the barriers to teach culture, including the limited class hours, the teacher's lack of teaching pedagogy, and students' lack of interest). It has been a year. Have you found any solutions for these barriers?
 - a. If you did, what are they?
 - b. If you did not, what do you need to convey these barriers?
5. Regarding these barriers, what kind of help do you expect from the School?

6. What are your suggestions for your colleagues, the School, and the policy-makers?

Interview Protocol 2. Chang

1. When I interviewed you in the summer of 2014, I heard that you had never read the documents of the Reform. I gave you a copy of the *Standards* last week. Has anything changed about your understanding of culture teaching after you read the document?
 - a. If there is, could you describe the change?
 - b. If there is not, could you explain why?
2. In the previous interview, you also mentioned that you did not pay attention to the new policies. You said that you saw related articles published, but you just ignored them. Could you explain why you did not care about the new policies?
3. After last summer when we met, did the School heads talked about culture teaching or the new cultural component of the Reform?
 - a. If they did, what were their attitudes toward it?
 - b. If they did not, do you know why they did not do it?
4. According to my previous analysis findings, you paid much more attention to school leaders' attitudes other than the new policies when you made your curriculum and instruction decisions.
 - a. Is this understanding correct?
 - b. If it is, could you tell why school heads' attitudes were more important than the new policies to you?
 - c. If it is not, could you tell me how much that the School heads' attitudes have impact on you?

5. In the previous interview, you doubted the sustainability of the Reform. You predicted that it would be a flash in the pan.
 - a. Could you tell me why you were so negative on the issue?
 - b. It has been a year, have you changed your idea on this issue?
6. Have you seen any changes happening in the School, such as new policies or requirements for the teachers as a consequence of the implementation of the new policies related to culture teaching?
7. Last summer when I interviewed you, you were concerned with the barriers for teachers to implement culture teaching in the classroom, such as the limited class hours, teachers' limited cultural and pedagogical knowledge. In the past year, did you find any solutions for these barriers?
8. Regarding these barriers, what kind of help do you expect from the School?
9. What are your suggestions for your colleagues, the School, and the policy-makers?

Interview Protocol 3. Lu

1. When I interviewed you in the summer of 2014, I heard that you had never read the documents of the Reform. I gave you a copy of the *Standards* last week. Has anything changed about your understanding of culture teaching after you read the document?
 - a. If there is, could you describe the change?
 - b. If there is not, could you explain why?
2. After last summer when we met, did the School heads talked about culture teaching or the new cultural component of the Reform?
 - a. If they did, what were their attitudes toward it?
 - b. If they did not, do you know why they did not do it?
3. Have you see any changes happening in the School, such as new policies or requirements for the teachers as a consequence of the implementation of the new policies related to culture teaching?
4. Last summer when I interviewed you, you were concerned with the barriers for teachers to implement culture teaching in the classroom, such as the limited class hours, teachers' limited cultural and pedagogical knowledge. In the past year, did you find any solutions for these barriers?
5. Regarding these barriers, what kind of help do you expect from the School?
6. What are your suggestions for your colleagues, the School, and the policy-makers?

Interview Protocol 4. Yang

1. When I interviewed you in the summer of 2014, I heard that you had never read the documents of the Reform. I gave you a copy of the *Standards* last week. Has anything changed about your understanding of culture teaching after you read the document?
 - a. If there is, could you describe the change?
 - b. If there is not, could you explain why?
2. After last summer when we met, did the School heads talked about culture teaching or the new cultural component of the Reform?
 - a. If they did, what were their attitudes toward it?
 - b. If they did not, do you know why they did not do it?
3. According to my analysis of your previous interview, you cared much about the School heads' attitudes toward culture teaching and the Reform. Their attitudes and the new policies, which one does have more impact on your curriculum and instructional decisions?
4. Could you explain why?
5. Have you see any changes happening in the School, such as new policies or requirements for the teachers as a consequence of the implementation of the new policies related to culture teaching?
6. Last summer when I interviewed you, you expressed concern with the barriers for teachers to implement culture teaching in the classroom, such as the limited class hours, teachers' limited cultural and pedagogical knowledge. In the past year, did you find any solutions for these barriers?

7. Regarding these barriers, what kind of help do you expect from the School?
8. What are your suggestions for your colleagues, the School, and the policy-makers?